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QUEEN MARY OF MEMORY LANE

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I.

IT was a quiet little by-street—Memory Lane; that portion of the city was built upon the farm of Thomas Memory, and this thoroughfare lay where the old lane had led to the farm-house. No more romantic reason for its name could be assigned; yet to some who loved Mary Scott it seemed in after years as though the gods themselves had planned it because Mary could not be forgotten.

The little house in Memory Lane was so full of sons and daughters that they seemed to have been coming on and on forever. The family record in the old Bible, facetiously styled "The Scotts' Book of Numbers," stated that Alfred Scott begat Hector, William, Elizabeth, Thomas, Paris, Myrtle, Launcelot, Mary, Ajax, known as Jack, with Alfred and Ephraim, twins. They were like puzzle blocks in a box, and had to be nicely adjusted to let the door close when they were all at home. How they were fed was even more of a riddle to their acquaintances.

Alfred Scott, a gentle, absent-minded scholar who had failed at life and was an old man at fifty, owned the little green-painted, five-roomed house, and nothing else. His father, a farmer in northern Michigan, was in diminished circumstance, and Alfred had spent such of his inheritance as came to him on an education that brought no equivalent in dollars and cents; so that his brother, to whom the homestead in Michigan would fall, complained when he still asked for more, though without always refusing. He did a little proof-

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reading where the Latin in a medical report, a legal article, or a too learned thesis taxed the information of the local printer; obtained ill-paid translating by means of desultory advertising; assisted a friendly bookman on busy days; and dreamed of gold-tipped laurels when he should have completed his translation of his loved poet; in his own words:

"The spirit on the farm that walks in the page of Virgil—Virgil, the text-book for boys that no man has gauged the soul of! Translators botanize that farm, and eat of its succulence, but the birds there, the voice of the stream, the spirit on the farm, is not in their English. I feel the charm. Surely I can impart it! It is a life labor of love."

It was characteristic of the man that, while he did feel and clearly interpret the beauty of the poet, he quite overlooked his incomplete equipment—for he was no versifier, and yet at heart himself too true a poet to hobble fancy with halting feet and imperfect rhymes. Thus he labored on so slowly, so inadequately, that he was taken by Fate, most unfairly, as a joke.

His sons—huge, bullet-headed scions of so gentle a progenitor, deep-water leviathans claiming for father a contemplative trout!—were early in life put to work, and their earnings confiscated for family use. Furthermore there was always credit, to which scholarly people seem peculiarly attracted, soaring above any unpleasantness incident to such aid in the support of life. Betsey had employment in a medicine factory, with good wages. She was a bony woman, with huge hands and feet; her best dress, a black cashmere which she wore on Sundays, shedding jet trimmings to be crunched underfoot and render nervous people impious. She walked and talked like a woman of forty, and had never, as she proudly asserted, had a beau in her life, or gone to a circus, evidently considering the two analogous dissipations.

The second daughter, Myrtle, a gentle, sweet-faced girl, suffered from an affection of the ankle joint. But there was one lion rampant on the Scott escutcheon. The third daughter, Mary, was a beauty, a dewy, blush rose among much heather; the Queen of the Scotts. And the Scotts did homage to their one exception. Household drudgery was not for such as she; and the family finery fell to her dimpled daintiness as a natural sequence.

Mary was gifted with a genius for needlework, and was a girlish artist in fabrics, colors, and forms. She sewed for several wealthy patrons, but her earnings were seldom diverted from their natural channel—herself. Once, in a fit of generosity, she had purchased a lavender bonnet for her mother, who always disappeared in a sun-bonnet-tunnel whenever she did "desert the twins" to visit a sick

neighbor; and a blue tie for her father, between whom and collars there had long been a coolness. But experience soon taught her that lavender bonnets and blue ties were better adapted to herself than to her parents; and her future expenditures were regulated along those comforting lines. Still, at sixteen one is improvident, and when Mary owned two dresses, a snarl of ribbons, and a hat, her industry waned, and she would read novels until imperative need forced her into earning a new sash or a more seasonable wrap.

So self-indulgent a seamstress was not to be relied on, and house-keepers often employed a less gifted needle-woman rather than wait for Mary Scott to finish her Duchess. The wilful beauty, therefore, could not always obtain employment when she would, was chronically moneyless, and often went more than a little shabby.

But she had never in her life been seriously crossed. Whatever she did was right in the eyes of her brothers and sisters, and she was the one bit of poetry in her mother's existence—it was not until after her conquest of young Dr. Urmson, that Alfred Scott emerged from his books to do her homage.

It had been during her employment as seamstress at the house of Kindrick Howard, the banker, that the great man's brother-in-law, becoming enamored of so fair a face, asked his sister's sewing girl to be his wife. Mary had not hesitated over her affirmative. At first sight her heart—that girlish, impulsive, irresponsible heart—had gone out to the handsome young doctor, who so soon became her lover. The wedding day was approaching, and wedding finery filled the house, when Alfred Scott, sitting in his large, familiar chair, his threadbare coat very shiny in the evening sun, folded his glasses and said with the air of a waking somnambulist:

"So you're going to marry a rich, good man, Mary, and there's promise of a broiling piece on the Scott family skeleton yet!"

"Reckon there is, father," laughed Mary. "And I'm happy as a big sunflower."

"Mary," said Alfred Scott suddenly, "do you ever dream?"

The blooming girl laughed merrily.

"I sleep like a log," she said, shaking her rich curls. "Thunder can't wake me. I don't know a thing from the time I lie down at night till I hear the twins hollering next morning."

"Well, well, I had a fancy—but let it pass."

"Pshaw! tell me the fancy, father; I'm nearly wild to hear it. What makes you begin and then stop and shake your head like *Juliet's* nurse?"

"So you can quote a classic, girl, albeit a lovesick one!"

"I wish I could dream," persisted Mary. "One night I swallowed a thimbleful of salt and went to bed backward—you know if you do

that and dream of drinking out of a tin cup you'll live in poverty; a glass is shabby gentility, and a silver goblet riches. But, bless you! I couldn't dream a thing. What made you ask such a question? Were you going to tell me something, daddy?"

"I had no particular matter to impart—it is a foolish fancy; yet I do not know that I need blush for it. Milton discoursed of angels walking familiarly in the garden with man; Saul desired confabulation with the spirit of Samuel; and what says Virgil?—'*Facilis descensus Averno*.' Pliny declares that he does not believe in the gods, but believes in dreams. I am in lordly company when I incline to superstition."

"I don't know much about that kind of thing," said Mary; "only, I like to see the new moon over my right shoulder. You're too deep for me, Pater; but don't go back to your book; let's talk some more. I wish I could buy the trick of dreaming, like a candlestick, to take to bed with me. I've always hankered after ghosts, and I'd be much obliged if you'd put me in the way of seeing one."

"Dreams, having deep significance, come to the pure, the imaginative, and the unhappy," said Alfred Scott ramblingly. "I cannot conceive of a beautiful woman without imagination. If she lack that, she will lack charm, and fade early. I am sure you must possess it. You have been warped by a one-sided life; your nature will right itself in time. You are very young—younger than your years."

"I reckon I *am* too fresh—ta-ra-ra-ra boom-de-ay!"

With a patient sigh Alfred Scott unfolded his glasses, erected them on his nose with the air of one fortifying a Gibraltar, and intrenched himself behind them. Mary knew from experience the strength of such a bulwark, and, whirling on one foot, her skirt in the movement knocking a book off his lap, she turned and left him. Before subsiding she let her dress overturn Myrtle's work-box, and was called to order with a plaintive—

"Mary Scott, if you don't pick up every one of those spools I won't sew another stitch for you." Then, as Mary dropped on her knee to obey, Myrtle went on: "Shall I cascade this lace down the front?"

"I reckon—if there'll be enough for the sleeves. Providence only knows when I'll get any more. I've stopped work."

"Oh!" said Myrtle, with mild dismay, "why didn't you wait till your wedding clothes were paid for?"

"Wedding clothes be hanged—on the line to dry. I'm not going to make a dress for a girl in the daytime and meet it on her at night, to be snubbed for my pains. I've had enough of that. The girls all had their caps set for Eugene, and they can't forgive my luck.

Some of them act too mean for anything—lowering eyelids to speak to me just as though I was fitting them! If I had gone on sewing, some day I'd have taken a crack at their heads with the handles of my scissors."

"Perhaps you're acting for the best. I suppose Dr. Urmson prefers you shouldn't work now."

"Oh, Gene's such an idiot! He calls me Penelope, and says I have glorified the needle as she did the shuttle. If I took snuff he'd have the sticks I'd chewed set in gold for souvenirs! I told him last night I wasn't going to sew my fingers to the bone for any man, and if he wanted me to have any more dresses he could buy them himself."

"What did he say?"

"Well, he said he liked girls and chickens dressed the same way."

"What!"

"Well, he did say something that meant that, as far as my clothes are concerned. You may like it better. He made up a Jim-dandy verse about my not working. Let me see—how did it go?"

"Love, why shouldst thou toil up the daily steps of time?
Rather place a free foot on the morning and bound
Into a new day, plunging like the snow white roe
Mid golden censored lilies
That toil not, nor do they spin."

"I wish you could trade Dr. Urmson's poem for a wedding veil," sighed the lame sister.

"Gene says I'm too pretty to be covered up with a piece of white lace, any way. As for the other things, I'll worry some money out of Betsey, and the boys'll chip in."

"But you know, Mary, with Hector and Billy in Little Rock, and Paris's salary cut down half, the boys can't help much; and you're out of everything. You haven't even a decent dress left over from last summer to begin with."

"Crickety! I forgot that—and Friday is the picnic!"

"The picnic?" repeated Myrtle interrogatively.

"Well, a sort of picnic. The River City Club has a lovely new launch, and they're going to take a very swell crowd up the river to their little country club-house at the golf links above Bale's Bluff. The lunch is to be served by Mallock's—you know what that means. Just to think of my going in that set!"

"But what will you wear, Mary?"

"Do you reckon Betsey'd set 'em up, if you asked her?"

"She can't this month. She just paid another doctor's bill for the twins."

"Hey, sis, won't it be jolly when I can buy what I like, and know the clerks are tickled to death to charge it? I'll have a hat made of bird-of-paradise feathers, and you shall have a razzle-dazzle of a ball dress. Oh, Myrt, Myrt, I didn't mean that—I forgot!"

For Myrtle, flushing painfully, had glanced down at her ankle.

"Never mind, Mary," she rallied pluckily. "Let us think what you can wear Friday."

Sitting on the floor, her loose light hair falling over one slim hand as sunny water ripples on a bed of pink pebbles, Mary chewed gum and meditated like a very graceful, young, white cow.

"Your gingham's are all faded out," Myrtle pronounced, facing the worst at once, "and you haven't a thing."

"There's the China silk. It isn't done, but I could finish it. Still, that would be a jay thing for a picnic."

"Your—'m—'m—your travelling dress might do—but it isn't cut out."

"And that isn't the worst of it: I haven't got the buttons or the velvet yet. They have sent on for 'em at Fischer's, but they won't be here till Monday. Couldn't I get a linen and charge it to daddy?"

"I'm afraid you'll be refused if you ask any more credit now. You owe about fifty dollars already. You would have this thread lace; and oh, everything costs so much!"

Mary stirred a bit impatiently.

"Holy smoke! This world—and then the next!"

"If you could wear anything of mine——" mused Myrtle, not very hopefully.

"Oh, yours! Go into such a crowd—Mrs. Dutton and those Stetson girls—in a last year's bunting with iron-rust on the back breadth! No, Myrtle, I've made up my mind. I shall wear my wedding dress."

"Why, Mary—Mary Scott!"

"It's what I'm going to do. Who's to know the difference? It's simply a fine white batiste; and it's high neck—perfectly suitable. If I soil it—well, I know some one'll give me a veil when the time comes; so it'll be covered up, any way. I can cut the trail off. Don't look so horrified—I'll whip it back on again. Under a veil and lace flounces the overcast seam'll never show."

"I don't—why, Mary, surely nobody ever heard of such a thing," Myrtle urged uncertainly, adding: "They say it isn't lucky to wear a wedding gown before the ceremony."

"Sometimes 'tisn't lucky to wear one at all. I wish you'd cut the trail off for me. I've got to get dressed." Mary rose, and, dropping her head abruptly forward, threw the flood of dancing golden

curls into a cascade over the front of her waist, then began gathering it to a knot high on her crown.

"Where are you going to-night?"

Still carelessly busy at her hair-dressing, Mary seated herself on the edge of the little table.

"To a lecture with Gene," she said, reaching for hairpins. "I know it'll be a bore; but it's at the club, and everybody'll be there. There's a man going to hold forth on spirit photographs, and give away cameras for making negatives of the 'astral body.' He was in Cleveland last night, and the newspapers say he's fine. But he won't give his contraptions to anybody but a 'sensitive.' Reckon he'll pick me out first thing—heigh ho!"

Her golden edifice rested upon her little head like a royal crown. She cast a cheerful glance at it in the mirror, then suddenly drew between her lips and coiled in air, like a lasso for invisible lovers, a string of chewing gum, replacing it with a sharp smacking noise which fairly took her father off his feet. He had been furtively watching her for some time, as she sat idly by, or arranged her goddess coronet, while her sister sewed upon her wedding finery. Now, taking Virgil under his arm, he strolled out to the viny side-porch, talking to himself—a habit to which learned people, in common with the ignorant and the insane, are often addicted.

"My Queen, you are very beautiful. But your soul is not born yet; and the birth of a soul brings terrible travail sometimes. It cost Undine her earth beauty and her light heart; she paid her immortal joy for it."

Seating himself absently under the shadow-sowing vine, the old threadbare scholar fancifully rambled on: "Mary, Queen of the Scotts, your days of *dolce far niente* in the pleasant land of youth may be numbered. Heredity marked you for bleak hills and a stony path among thistles. You do not come from easy-lived ancestors. You are not ripe for peace to pluck. Peace——" The word pricked to life a personal realization of his own need. "In allegory Peace is a wise goddess dwelling on impregnable heights; and she lets a heart ripen as we do a peach, in sun and shower, before gathering. But peaches rot, not ripen, in the long, long rains. My heart has had too many seasons of tears; and Peace will none of it."

"What'd you say, daddy?" asked Mary, mischievously peeping out at him with a jaw snap that affected the nervous scholar like a pistol shot. "Talking to the ha'nts?"

"No, daughter, no," was the patient rejoinder. "I was only reading to myself. *Tantane animis caelestibus ira?*"

"Go it, daddy!" cheered Mary. "Give it to the ha'nts. Sic 'em in Latin—that's the language for ha'nts—it's dead, too!"

II.

"Now, whatever you do, Gene," said Mary, as she set forth with her lover to attend the lecture on spirit photography, "don't step on my dress, for it's pinned up with safeties, and it'll come off, sure pop, if you do. The gathers to my skirt are always masculine."

"How do you make that out?" asked Dr. Urmson, laughing.

"Oh, they're so fond of going on a tear!"

"And so easy for you to gather in, eh? You pretty child!"

Mary regarded him with a rapturous look, leaning heavily on his arm. She sometimes lost herself in wonder at her great happiness, reflecting how big and splendid her lover was, and how fond of her; what a handsome home her new one was to be, and on what fair, swift wings her wedding day approached. And thus she was thinking as she tripped at his side, "making eyes" at him sweetly in the moonlight.

Urmson, with a half-dozen other men of his club, was playing at interest in psychic phenomena. J. Champe Macalester, Jr., one of the group, a leading spirit in Urmson's set, and by far the wealthiest member it contained, had come across the lecturer of the evening holding forth on the street corner of a great Eastern city. Struck by the man's earnestness, and impressed by some remarkable tests, young Macalester, accustomed to follow the moment's whim, had brought the curbstone lecturer to address an invited audience in the club banquet room.

At eight o'clock a middle-aged individual wearing a scholar's collegiate gown of faded black, unintroducted and without a sponsor, ascended the small stage at the front. His feet were bare, his hair and beard untrimmed, but a curious suggestion of elegance clung about him, and as he stood, his brilliant gaze roving over the astonished audience, he had the composure of a man accustomed at some time to the platform.

"This is a *rara avis*," whispered Urmson.

"And what nice little feet he's got," observed Mary, complacently touching her hair to scintillate her engagement ring in the eyes of her enemies. "I hope he won't be dry."

"Ladies and gentlemen," began the lecturer; and his rich, flexible, cultured voice was a new surprise, "to-day man speaks to man with wireless telegraphy; darts invisible forces into space, overcoming with hypnotism others beyond his vision; pierces the human frame and the solid earth with rays of all-penetrating light; photographs invisible stars; understands and communicates with the fish in the deep and the creatures in African jungles; puts life-

like movements into pictures, and voices into metal. And all these are but straws blown in advance of greater wonders that the future is bringing; they are but indications of the day when life, death, and the possibilities of the immortal spirit shall be no longer mysteries to the living!"

"He's poky. I knew he would be," whispered Mary.

Eugene's arm was thrown over her chair, and she nestled against it with affectionate, child-like abandon.

"Wait a little," he said. "I'm going to try to get a spirit-camera for you."

"That to which I would call your attention this evening," continued the lecturer, "is another of the straws from the storm, but, taken as an indication of what may yet be, it has its value. The principle or theory of my work has been for some time investigated by students of occultism as 'mental suggestion.' The forces which they utilize for this and for absent treatment, so called, I have attempted to harness with nicely adjusted electric cells in my psychic camera, which I call 'The Amulet.' A toy, if you like, but a scientific toy; and I hope it may yet accomplish something. Worn on the breast of a sensitive, this instrument will, I believe, gather odic force from his being—from the subconscious lion in the soul of man. When the test is made the wearer must be, if not actually in the clairvoyant state, at least in strong emotional activity of some sort. The right hand is then laid upon the amulet, the will power concentrated either upon seeing or projecting an image. If the mental attitude is an inquiry, the answer to it will appear floating in the air before the vision of the inquirer. If the mental attitude is an answer, then before the vision of that one to whom the answer is addressed, however far distant, will (as I hope) appear the face of the wearer of the amulet. Do you understand?"

A listener in the audience made a suggestion which neither Urmson nor Mary caught. "'Self-hypnotized?'" echoed the lecturer. "Perhaps so. A hypnotized person, to the best of my knowledge and belief, whether self-hypnotized or thrown into the hypnotic trance by outside influences, such as crystal gazing, is put in communication with an intelligence greater, or at least more extensive, than his own. If this be so, and my camera successful, then by its aid the prisoner may visit his wife on the night before his execution, or behold her beside him on the scaffold; the forsaken maiden follow in appeal her callous lover, the praying mother rise before her son at his debaucheries, or fall asleep thinking he stands at her bedside.

"The practical, visible attribute of the amulet is a small, locket-like camera," he continued, holding up a shining chain and pendant. "I say camera—it contains a sensitive plate. It must not be opened

—it must for no purpose ever be removed. I have toiled alone, in sorrow and solitude, among the lonely forests of an almost inaccessible mountain, to develop the amulet. How much I have achieved the future must determine.

"As only those keenly sensitive to clairvoyant visions and susceptible of deep and most intense emotions can be expected to obtain results from the amulet, I must insist that all who desire to purchase first submit to the test of the Sensitive Denotator which I hold in my hand. It is quite free. Those desirous of so doing will kindly approach the stage by the left aisle. I may mention that the price of an amulet is two dollars—merely a nominal sum charged to aid in defraying my traveling expenses."

"Oh, is that all?" said Mary, with a little relieved sigh. "He's good for something—he can stop."

"He mustn't sell those things here," fumed the doctor. "I thought we had made that clear to him. We'll buy the lot and give them to such of the audience as want to try them." The young physician spoke as though the amulets were cotillion favors.

Champe Macalester paused beside them on his way to the small stage.

"He's a remarkable man, don't you think?" he murmured, with a keen, appreciative glance at Mary. "Notice that peculiarity of the brows. They are tied together above the eyes with muscular contraction, as though shading the keen soul from the glare of its great discovery. You see that look in all scientific men. For women and poets, a broad brow and wide eyes, like windows flung up to give the spirit a full view"—he looked with open admiration at Mary's big blue orbs—"but Lincoln, Napoleon, Wellington—nearly all earnest, great men—have those hollow eye-sockets, overhanging brows, and that look of concentration."

"Have they?" said Mary vaguely. "I wouldn't deprive them of it for anything. Will you take me up there, Gene?"

"Certainly—shall we go now?"

The audience had risen and was astir. The timid lingered at their seats; the cynical and the hurried elbowed a path to the exits; but the majority pressed towards the stage. Those who had already ascended the platform when young Macalester and the lovers reached it gathered in embarrassed groups, feeling like freaks at a museum. The lecturer was leaning forward, scanning every face with almost pathetic intensity.

"That man has a story," asserted Macalester, as they waited their turn. "He might be a Homer begging among the cities which quarreled to claim his birthplace. Now we can pass. Come this way, to the steps."

Mary giggled and whispered happily in Urmson's ear, "Every one will see us together up there."

"I shall be proud of that," said her lover, glancing at her beautiful face. She wore her winter dress, an old black silk too shabby for daylight, with cuffs and collar of cherry velvet, and looked radiant. Meeting his eyes, she blushed and dimpled.

"But my skirt is so frayed. And oh, crickety, Gene, if a 'safety' should give way!"

"You don't think they will?" asked Dr. Urmson in some alarm.

"I'm praying," said Mary briefly. "If they do, don't blame me. It's your funeral—you brought me here."

"I wanted you to have an amulet, dear."

"I'll probably get one; I'm such a sensitive—now, ain't I?"

"You look like one," murmured Urmson, but confessed to himself that little spirituality emanated from the girlish beauty. Well, and if there did not? Among Jupiter's beloved was one fair heifer! What, save beauty, did man need in a wife? Medical *confrères* and fellow clubmen afford congenial companionship and intellectual sympathy; a poet will dine for the asking at good houses; learning, condensed in calf-skin, is for sale in all bookstores; but even the men angels forgot to care for mates of heavenly wisdom when gazing on the first created fair daughters of earth. Secure in the crowd, he pressed Mary to his side, whispering:

"Little love, little Light o' Roses!" He knew her lack of much he prized, but he did not miss it now. Who would demand of a flower that it work a problem in algebra, or throw it aside because such a thing were impossible?

"Look," said the happy girl, "there's Eddie Eames. He's 'most dead with consumption. What do you reckon he wants of an amulet?"

Urmson frowned as a wan lad with feverish eyes, clad in the livery of the club, whose messenger he was, pressed forward, pleading with the lecturer:

"Sell me one of them things, mister. My mother's in England, prayin' for a sight o' me. Mebbe it'd give her a picture of me in the air as I'm dyin'. She'd think a heap o' that."

"You may have the amulet, my boy," said the man gently. "Never mind the money. I do not need it, and you may. You are a sensitive. May heaven be merciful and bless your mother and yourself."

"He'll do!" said Mary, with a crisp nod. "Didn't he say that 'never mind the money' beautifully? I wish our grocer was like that."

"I don't understand it. He has the air of a sane man, of a gentle-

man, though so grotesquely garbed; but he's picked out John Wain, Cedar's barkeeper, a man we were obliged to dismiss from the service of the club for drunkenness, as a good subject. How did the fellow get in here?"

Cedar's barkeeper was bleary-eyed and sheepish; but the "Sensitive Denotator" reddened over his pulse.

"You are a descendant of Saul," said the lecturer quietly. "You are among the prophets—the spirit is strong in you. You do not realize your own gifts."

"What kind of spirit?" whispered Mary.

"Never had no chance," mumbled the man. "How does this thing go on, anyhow?" and he fumbled, shamefaced, with his purchase.

"Wear the chain about the neck, next to the skin," kindly explained the lecturer.

"My sister's crippled and can't get about; she sets a sight by me," avowed the big, clumsy animal timorously. "She'd be tickled to death if this'd work. She heard of you down at Cleveland, and telegraphed me to get one and try it for her sake;" and he moved on.

Men who laugh at superstition get "fighting mad" at the doubting of their mediumistic powers. There are moods when it is regarded as an insult even to assert, "You are no liar." Such was the state of unreason of this aristocratic crowd, and it took its continuous defeat badly.

"What's the matter with you?" grumbled a Probate Judge. "What you sticking that sensitive register at me for, anyhow? Isn't it the two dollars you want?"

"No," said the lecturer, in his bare feet and shabby gown—and his voice was low and gentle. "I do not care for the money. It could not benefit either of us for me to make a mistake. I am conscientious in my work. I wish to make sales only to sensitives. Otherwise my experiment is foreordained to failure."

"He's turning 'em all down like a bad poker deal," whispered Mary. "He's never given out one but to Eddie and that red-faced man. He must be crazy."

"Crazy he is not. Come, now, let us try your luck," was Dr. Urmson's reply.

"You go first," giggled Mary.

"Very well."

He had not intended to test his fortune with the eccentric salesman, but to admonish the man that the things must be given away, not sold, in the club-house. Now, feeling that Mary could not be successful, while he was sure of recognition, he held out his hand. He did so with confidence, for was he not of a finely attuned emo-

tional temperament—a nature highly evolved? Did he not incline ever to the unmaterial argument, the cause of sentiment? Had he not just chosen for love alone a poor sewing girl?

The amulet maker regarded intently the high-bred young man before him; the dark, regular, wide-browed face with sparkling black eyes was significant of intellect and passion; features, contours, bearing, all showed the refining influence of thought and cultivation. But he dropped the hand suddenly with a sigh.

"What's the matter?" asked Eugene sharply.

"That I do not know. You promised to be a perfect subject. But—look for yourself." The mysterious liquid in the small Denotator had turned black.

"Nonsense!" said the young man haughtily, absurdly put out.

"It would seem that you feel keenly—but, perhaps, superficially. Concentrative emotion is necessary to all clairvoyant power."

Dr. Urmson, with a smile which was almost a sneer, strode off the stage. Mary was hastening after him when, with a little movement, the lecturer detained her.

"Will you submit to the test, young lady?"

She shrugged a piquant shoulder and stopped. Eugene, looking back, thought her more beautiful than ever. Surely his heart beat warmly now. One on fire with such love must smile at the obtuseness which pronounced him superficial.

"The man is a charlatan," he muttered. "There is some trick about that colored test-tube." Then the irritation of the moment effervesced in ridicule. Mary had winked at him with such audacious waggishness that he could not keep his face straight. What a very clown of flowers, with stars shaking like jester's bells in her eyes, was this girl! He was eager to have her nearer, her soft arm again within his own.

"Come on," he said, reaching up his hand to her and smiling.

"Wait a moment," requested the lecturer; "this promises to be the best subject I have yet encountered. Her emotional nature is deep and strong."

"Ah," said Eugene, flushing, "the young lady is to be envied."

"To be pitied," corrected the lecturer. "The capacity to feel pain differs, as the nerves of the teeth differ in various individuals; fine nerves are fit to string harps for angels—but they vibrate keenly under sorrow."

"I don't have toothache," said Mary, "or nightmare. Why should people think I ought to have them? I'm very commonplace."

"Perhaps not. A sensitive is never that," countered the quiet voice.

"Why, I can't read poetry, except 'Star Spangled Banner' and 'Yankee Doodle.'"

Then, to Eugene's horror, the wild girl, forming a horn of two loose fists, blew shrilly through them a bar from the latter 'poem'!

The audience tittered. And yet—and yet a quaint picture of ragged soldiers marching on bleeding feet but with dauntless eyes, chaunting through blue lips their triumph, with an enemy's stolen roundelay, seemed to rise and float, dream-like, about Miss Mischief as she whistled the old Chorus Call of Freedom with such American bravado.

"There!" said Mary. "D'you think I've got an aching nerve or 'sensitive' hanging to me now?"

"You are an Undine," said the lecturer, faintly smiling. "You may prize the amulet—when you find your soul. I should like you to have one."

"No," said Eugene angrily; "the lady has no desire to be the target for further remark." How dare this man attract so much attention to the young girl, or lead her into such an exhibition of herself!

But Mary was not to be cowed.

"I want an amulet," she protested in a good loud voice. "I want one bad. If you don't get it for me, Gene Urmson, I'll——"

"Certainly," said her lover hastily, and bought the object, amid much subdued laughter. He felt like a boy rolling, naked, in prickly grass. He could have borne much if only his name had been omitted. But he knew that every stranger there was thinking, "So this is Dr. Urmson and the little sewing girl he is going to marry!" Mary felt his arm tremble with anger as he assisted her from the stage, and, glancing up at him, she grew a little afraid.

"Let's go down the fire escape, please," she said meekly, one dimple showing.

Urmson turned without a word and led her to the low window through which they reached the proposed exit. In the iron box, holding them up above earth, alone under the stars, the little siren leaned toward her indignant lover, cooing:

"Please unhook my collar and put on the amulet."

He hesitated. Then—

"Oh, you witch!" he said, and laughed at himself for obeying.

It was a very fair throat under the cherry velvet; and as he clasped the chain about it a peachy cheek curled over against his hand.

"I'll be good, Gene," announced a childish voice.

"Sweetheart," he murmured ardently, his lips close to the peachy cheek, "swear to me that no hand but mine shall unclasp this chain."

"You're hooking that collar in my ear!"

"The pretty ear;" and he kissed the little rosy shell.

"Hush, they're all coming this way." Then, as the entrance darkened with hurrying figures, Mary, lifting her voice for their benefit, piped:

"Gracious! Gene Urmson, don't squeeze my hand so!"

But he was proof against even this, and only smiled idolatrously, murmuring inanely on:

"Promise me. Some purposeful undercurrent in life may have washed this talisman into our possession, Mary dear. Let it be sacred to me. Do not part from it until you are a wife, and your husband's hand removes it."

"Yes"—suddenly—"I promise that."

"Then it is sacred to me."

"To you—or another," quoth Mary, tilting her head. "How do I know who my husband will be? 'There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.'"

"There shall be no slip"—almost grimly. "If you live, Mary, you shall be my wife."

The impulsive girl did not reply until they had turned into a side street, where the shadow of a church enveloped them. Then she stopped him unexpectedly and kissed his lips twice.

"Mary!" he exclaimed, delight abated by his greater sense of decorum in public places.

"I love you so! I love you so!" she breathed.

They were alone in the soft night. In the quiet street by the old church—how often was she to recall that scene!—he clasped her to him and showered caresses on her velvety flesh.

"If I were lying dead in there, and you came to me," he whispered, "I should know it was she who kissed me to-night. Little love, perhaps flowers are dead men's memories of the lips they loved, breaking through the darkness of graves, too sweet for the sun not to seek them."

"You've knocked my hat into the middle of next week," announced Mary, with one of her abrupt transitions. "Some policeman'll be running us in—come on!"

She broke from him and danced sideways up the street towards Memory Lane. A distant band was playing; the stars were brilliant.

"I'm Captain Jinks of the horse marines;
I feed my horse good corn and beans,"

trilled Mary. Dr. Urmson attempted to take her hand, but, dancing at his side, she eluded his touch until they arrived at the Scott home. At the gate—why have hired jesters spoiled the sweet old pictures every man and woman can recall at these words? A hush in the air;

Nature holding her breath to hear young hearts beat; honeysuckle scents abroad; silence; where a city trod so recently, only Love and Death, the two strong and sleepless forces of existence, awake. Life as a whole may be disappointing; but such moments, and their memory, are worth being born to have found.

Mary swung on the gate, naturally; it was not her first experience; little lovers had courted her there since the age of three—perhaps earlier, but she could remember no further back. For many a lad was it Memory Lane!

"I am looking forward to Friday," she said pensively. "I do hope it won't rain or be cold. Isn't this a backward spring?"

"Not to me. I have all the flowers of summer here in my arms."

"Huh—silly! Say, d'you suppose the girls——"

"The starlight shines on your hair like gold," the low, passionate voice went on. "Kiss me good night, Mary."

"Don't, Gene."

"Please—why, darling!—just once."

"Oh, not again!"

"Little sweetheart, little wife, will the day ever dawn when no good night is feared?"

"You're not mad a bit, are you?"

"I angry? Why should I be?" He had forgotten his humiliation of the early part of the evening. When she saw that this was so, Mary suddenly leaned over the gate and pressed her sweet lips to his eyes, whispering one of the quaint fancies with which she sometimes surprised her friends.

"*Stay blind.* I have locked your eyelashes down tight with love." Then, with a soft laugh, she ran up the walk and disappeared in the house, leaving him to pace up and down before her window, forgetful of everything in life save her beauty.

Myrtle, clothed in statuesque white, sat like patience on a bed lounge, in the front room, waiting to unlock the door. Mary came upon her whirlwind fashion.

"I've had the jolliest time!" she panted. "And I got an amulet—look here." And, flinging her garments to the four corners of the room, the Queen of the Scotts threw her young loveliness on the bed lounge, and almost instantly fell into dreamless sleep, the amulet on her breast, her moist lips warm with caresses, and the footsteps of her lover echoing in front of her door.

III.

FRIDAY morning, clouds like giant grapes, purple and wine-dark with moisture, were played upon by flushes of light, as of

an atmospheric tremulousness out of the stir of new life in earth's warming heart.

"It's going to rain," prophesied Myrtle as she helped Mary dress.

"Let her go, Gallagher," said Mary. "I'll not stay at home—not if it rains rattlesnakes and hails porcupines."

"Couldn't you wear your black silk?"—dubiously.

"No, thank you! Wouldn't I *look*, in that old thing! Remember I helped make one costume for this affair. I know what the other girls have, too. Miss Morris has a blue linen, stiff as a man's shirt-bosom; it has the quaintest blue and yellow blouse, with a great, dashing sailor collar. Miss Fain's is a Paris dress (think of that, and say black silk!) dark green with light blue piping, and queer pink satin imitations of sea-shells on the vest. The one I made for Gene's niece is white piqué trimmed with black braid, a tight-waisted, mannish coat, and a shirt front all braided—it's simply stunning!"

"Will any of them wear thin dresses?" Myrtle ventured.

"Miss Byrne bought two suits: a white muslin, big lace hat, and a pink parasol; and a blue and white flannel, so she could outwit the weather."

"She'll decide on the flannel to-day, sure."

"Well, lots of 'em'll be in white; and I never have a blue nose, so it won't show if I am cold. Reckon ma'll notice what I've got on, and raise a row?"

Mary was spared this complication. As she entered the family circle, a twin sliced his thumb on the bread knife, and her mother hurried out with the screaming child.

Paris regarded his pretty sister dubiously, but contented himself by observing:

"Girls are fools. Even a canary would know enough to tie up its head in a flannel nightcap this weather."

"That's about what Myrtle wants me to do. Please pass the molasses, Jim."

Alfred Scott looked up.

"The day is lowering—isn't the atmosphere chill for white?"

"White's a winter color," said Mary good-naturedly. "Where's Betsey?"

"Gone to her work half an hour ago."

"I'm glad she's out the way. She's so poky—sometimes. She's the flannel nightcap one of the family. I never have forgiven her for putting rubbers on me when I was a kid—setting me down hard on a stool, and crowding my feet into things that looked like the stomachs of little black pigs."

When Mary, wearing the mutilated wedding dress, was ready

for her betrothed, she was a vision almost bewildering to one who had never seen her in white.

She was an old-time, doll beauty. Types of face change with centuries as do fashions of garments, as though craving in the soul of the race for new ideals gradually produced them in the features of children. Greuze saw such small heads, oval contours, large, clear eyes, and Cupid's-bow mouths; this latter feature, mental development and social requirements calling for labial activity have widened in our women; but Mary had the short, arched upper, and rosy, pouting lower lip of the castle lady much alone in pensive contemplation. She possessed the warmth of coloring sung in Anacreon's day. Indeed, her complexion was a blond wax doll's, the pink on cheeks and little dimpled chin not shading off, but ceasing in bright contrast against a dazzling white; and this, with the small, waxen, daintily tilted nose, teeth of strung pearl, and masses of softly curling light hair, was artificial in appearance; impressing one as almost too good to be true. Her brow was a trifle high, a little square; but curls concealed that. Her expression was as changeful as her words, but always notable for a kind of shining, as though something even brighter than themselves were behind her eyes.

Now, she had the kitten face, charming by its three-cornered, irresponsible joyousness; but that delicate chin and jaw, the big, changeful eyes which yet had room between them for a soul, the airy, nobly arched white temples that her yellow curls were pulled down to hide—surely these might have housed and expressed the brain of a poet, if not a philosopher.

For the rest, she was of medium height and softly moulded, with the delicate hands and feet, the fine, small wrist and ankle, that speak of race.

The dress of semi-transparent white gained a quaint, winning simplicity of outline by the removal of the lace flounces—though it was left thereby a trifle scant; and its frosty purity freed the splendors of her young beauty, which often, in the dingy woolen working dress, seemed a thing dulled and prisoned behind a dim pane. Her lover was astonished at feeling a kind of awe in the presence of his beloved thus adorned.

"Why has so much trouble been taken to perfect you?—you exquisite being!" he whispered. "If you were not mine, Mary, I could curse Providence for having shown you to me. I never had sympathy for a drunkard until I tasted the sweetness of your lips; then I understood the mania—'more or death.'"

"Reckon it'll rain?" said Mary, impudently pretending to wipe the pink blossom mouth with the back of her hand. "Ugh! you've been smoking. I taste tobacco."

"I see the amulet chain shining through your delicate bodice."

"Does it look bad?"

"No, no—it's beautiful, the little silver gleam. Promise me that no one shall unfasten it but me."

"Well, don't bother now. Is my hat on straight?"

"How can I tell? I see only a black thatch above a trellis of roses."

"Gene, you—you don't think I am dressed inappropriately?" she hesitated.

"Does Aurora need to inquire of the fashions? You lovely—still, as you mention it, will you be warm enough? Most of 'em are in some sort of flannel."

"Oh! And will I be the only girl in white?"

"They're not all down to the boat yet. Yes—I did notice one or two in white, but it was stuff you couldn't see through."

Mary choked.

"I haven't got another thing——" she began.

"Mary—sweetheart—dear little girl—you couldn't look more divine, if only you won't take cold."

"I never caught cold in my life! Well, 'come on,' as they say in Alice's Wonderland;" and she cheered visibly.

"Wait a minute."

"What for?"

"Mary, do you love me? And you won't make me jealous? You—you radiance! No one can see you and not go half mad. Are you sure, dearest, I shall always be first in your heart?"

"Eugene!" The tone of her voice startled him; what she did took his breath. Springing on a low stool, she drew his head against her breast and on his face he felt tears.

"See," she said. "I baptize you king of my soul."

The earth swayed before his eyes as he led her out into the murky, threatening April morning. The last thought to reach him through his daze of bliss would have been this divine child's inadequate protection against the weather. Who considers sneezing while approving Love's mere two wings for costume? He put her in the waiting cab, and held her close as they drove toward the river. Marrying one's sister's seamstress had its compensations; no bored and boring chaperon occupied the carriage with them.

Neighbors had flocked to front windows and doors to watch Mary Scott going out with her rich lover.

"Some folks is born to eat the corn, and some to husk the ears," said a large, square-faced woman, wiping the suds from her arms with a checked apron. "What a difference a face makes in a body's com-

fort! Ah, law! It's life or death to a woman whether her nose happens to be straight or crooked."

"You never said a truer thing, Mrs. Borcharding," chimed in Sallie Bob Pickard from the fence. "And Mary Scott's worth looking at. She's always mighty friendly, too, and good-natured."

"Did you know she'd refused to join the Communion Class again this year?" jealously interpolated a small, bony female on the opposite side of Mrs. Borcharding's small yard. "Looks like Providence oughter interfere in them kind of folks's prosperity, so's not to give rise to talk. Heap of people are gettin' to say, 'Only the wicked are blest.'"

"And that's true, too, Mrs. Carr," croaked a slattern from a doorstep. "When I was a girl we was obliged to be steady and industrious to be thought anything of—or ever get a husband; but these days any young thing with curly hair (specially if it's light) can talk slang, act fast, fly 'round and do little or no work, and have her pick of the men. Look at them Scotts. Betsey and Myrtle slave from morning to night, and they're nice, modest girls, too; but neither of 'em ever had a beau in her life, while here goes Miss Flyaway, with hands like clabber, riding off with a rich man."

"Mary Scott wasn't no great shakes in school," volunteered the bony female's fat daughter. "I guess she was smart enough, but study she would not."

"That's right, Maud," laughed Sallie Bob indulgently from the fence. "The little witch was always sitting on the gate-post, chewing gum and talking to a crowd of boys."

"But Dr. Urmson is the first steady company she ever had," cut in Maud's mother, glancing involuntarily at her clumsy offspring.

"Well, well," sighed the slovenly sitter on the doorstep, "this won't get my washing done. Reckon if I'd been born with strawberries and cream in my face, I wouldn't have to rub out no workman's overalls."

IV.

THE dainty, luxurious little pleasure boat, flying gay bunting, was alive with young people when Mary and Eugene arrived. He had been right; most of the young ladies were in flannels. Where a white dress appeared, it was almost invariably flannel or rough woolen; also, escorts and attendants were carrying all sorts and weights of wraps. They were quick to observe and suspect the reason for the absence of these precautions on the part of the sewing girl. Mary saw an elevation of eyebrows over the party-like air of her costume.

But there was no such criticism in the faces of the men. Scarcely

had the girl's pretty feet touched the deck when she was surrounded by masculine admirers. Yet, poor girl, so true was her heart that all other men were but as trees walking, and one cold glance from the women friends of her promised husband was a stab most cruel to endure, its pain not to be assuaged by any compensating trousered adulation.

She took it ill, too—poor Mary! In her terror, stepping swiftly down into the inferior position these others were fain to assign her.

"Do you see the horrid things?" she whispered to Eugene. "They're sticks—but they're making fun of me with their simpering faces. I've a notion to give 'em something to make fun of."

The child woman was not sensitive; but the best in her withered under such a reception as these women gave her.

She realized fully that the group which welcomed her was masculine to an insulting extent. The girls, holding hands and sitting close by each other, were emphatically ranged in a separate group. The chaperons, who had already placed Mary, were reading her out, in a hateful cluster, like a bunch of over-ripe fruit criticising a new leaf-bud. Mrs. Howard had emerged from what might be termed the sable cloud of her nurse, in whose arms fretted a spoiled child, and Eugene besought her to come to his relief.

"Can't you—can't you speak to Mary?" he appealed in a low voice.

Mrs. Howard rose obediently; she felt some awe of her brother.

"What shall I say?" she asked practically.

Say? What could she say? Read that radiant madcap a lesson! He knew better than that. "Say—why, something soothing. She—well, she's distressed about her dress. Stand by her. It isn't—I can't—she needs petticoats."

"O-o-oh! Why, Eugene! Never mind—of course it's right for you to come to me about *anything*. Do you want me to take her downstairs and give her one of mine?"

He regarded her somewhat sadly. She was not subtle, this sister of his.

"I was not speaking literally. What I really wish is a woman companion for Mary. Come, Frances, and be with her; she needs you."

Mrs. Howard, with a regretful last look at the downy-headed silver lining to the sable cloud, moved forward into the swiftly flowing current and attached her diminutive figure and forceless personality to the glowing beauty, who—aroused, perturbed, a dynamo in full action—never realized that she was there. She ventured a few remarks on the weather and the baby's teeth; but the men

were managing matters in Mary's vicinity, and the well meaning chaperon soon found herself tactfully but most firmly elided from the circle.

"So glad to see you," murmured a voice at Urmson's side. "I want you to meet my niece, Miss Arthur. What a very innocent, high-spirited girl Miss Scott is—a lovely wild flower. Ah, you young men! Was she easier to win than a rose guarded by the thorns of social conventionalities?"

The young man winced. Mary had been easily won; their acquaintance did not cover six months, and during three of these she had been his betrothed wife.

"Let us find your cousin," he said, hastily diverting the conversation from the subject of Mary. "Isn't it she who plays the violin so delightfully?"

"Nellie does play well, and she's so eager to meet you."

"Gene, Gene! come quick and choose me. We're going to play kissing games."

Kissing games! It came home to Dr. Urmson that a lover of Queen Mary had better waste no time with visiting young ladies who played the violin and desired to meet him. He "came quick," not waiting for the formality of an "excuse me" to Mrs. Dutton.

A circle holding hands danced to meet him.

"Oh, drop it, fellows! Come, let up on this," he said appealingly to his men friends. "Kissing games are bad form. And there's the orchestra tuning up—we're to have dancing, you know."

At that the group which had originated the idea of kissing games began to besiege Mary.

"Do you waltz, Miss Scott?"

"Miss Scott, me first."

"Oh, but, you fellows, hold on there! Miss Scott, give me one dance."

"Where's a programme to put my name down?"

"Go away—all of you," laughed Mary. "This is too absurd. I can't dance. I'm a Sunday-school girl."

"But really, now——"

"Of course it's a jest."

"You're fooling—you dance, surely."

"But I don't. I could manage a lancers. I ran away once to a policemen's ball and learned that, but Betsey took me home before I caught on to anything else."

"Oh, we'll have lancers!"

"Tell that band lancers!"

"Partners for the lancers!"

"Why, what a singular selection," gasped Mrs. Dutton. "Lan-

cers! It was out of date when I was sixteen. Can any of these girls dance it? Can you, Nellie?"

A pretty girl, exquisitely dainty from the mignonette in the buttonhole of her blue coat to the tips of her tiny patent leathers, turned and replied sweetly:

"No, auntie dear, I couldn't dance it; but of course that doesn't matter."

"But it does," protested Eugene, in distress. "We will waltz."

"Crickety! yes. Give us a waltz. You'll teach me, won't you, Mr. Macalester?"—with infallible instinct appealing to the man who had betrayed his interest in her the evening of the lecture. Macalester, with his unshakable *sang froid*, his impressive ugliness, and his consummate elegance in dress, was easily the dominating figure in the assemblage. Going up to him like a saucy child, Mary rested a hand on his shoulder in waltzing position.

"I think," stammered young Urmson, his face burning, "we—might—have one lancers."

"Oh, no!" urged Macalester eagerly. But the other men opposed him, and lancers it was. There were others besides Mrs. Dutton and her niece who did not participate; but enough of the younger girls were recruited to make a set. Now for a time the sun looked out with a doubtful smile. The orchestra was excellent. They made merry over teaching those who did not know the old-fashioned dance. And wherever Mary was, there the fun rose fastest and loudest. With the golden hair ruffled out about her flushed face, the blue eyes like glowing sapphires above the roses of her cheeks, her lithe body almost never at rest, her voice continually raised in some new jest or merriment, she was like a young priestess of pagan mirth.

At noon the boat anchored off a wooded promontory, and the party climbed to the new pavilion. The building was an ornamental structure, with open sides and one end so thrust against the rising ground as to make the floor level with an artificial terrace of treeless grass. The front had broad white steps. Servants from the boat were already assisting the caterer's men around a long table. Mary ran gaily ahead of the others, and threw herself on the ground in an abandon that accentuated the curves of her exquisite form. Macalester, a college boy or so, and two of the younger girls soon reached her. Urmson had been detained by Mrs. Dutton's misfortune in losing a ring. The jewel found, it fell to his lot to come on with Miss Arthur. With his arm under hers as they climbed, he was suddenly overcome by the desire to explain, to palliate, Mary's pranks, and asked impulsively:

"Have you met Miss Scott?"

"Yes," said his companion non-committally.

"She—she is very young, you know, and inexperienced."

Miss Arthur, in the absence of many ideas to express, had with much labor acquired a curious vocabulary of recondite words, which, promiscuously applied, befogged one portion of her listeners and cast a glamour over another. She now performed one of her conversational feats for Dr. Urmson's benefit.

"I think, though," she said, "that if the Greeks had seen Miss Scott, they would have made Orpheus a woman."

Her companion looked duly mystified, and she expounded: "Because, you know, sound waves have color; and hers is so entrancing. Mozart must have been playing in heaven 'when God thought of her first.'"

"That is a tribute worthy of its recipient," declared Urmson, glowing. He was of the sort to be dazzled rather than amused by this young woman's verbal acrobatics. "Indeed, Miss Arthur, it bewilders a man to hear one beautiful girl praise another; his admiration leaps back and forth till it blinds him. How glad I should be if you and Mary were friends!"

"Thank you." Her voice was perhaps colder than she knew. In it, and in the sudden distaste on her countenance, was made plain that the classical tirade had been strictly for purposes of display. Here was an expression cruelly spontaneous and sincere.

"Have you brought your violin?" he asked hastily.

"Mr. Macalester, I believe, stored it among the wraps and other impedimenta."

"I should be delighted to hear you play."

"Don't expect too much. A girl's music is always disappointing to a man—and one of critical taste. It has so little strength."

"Perhaps so," said Urmson; then, half unconsciously emulating her own manner: "I don't think perfect natures ever seem quite strong to a man. In the aiming at perfection there is always a hint of being afraid of Satan; and all cowardice is a confession of weakness—which makes it, you see, an adjunct of perfection."

Miss Arthur, thus answered in her own kind, rather blenched. She feared that she had met a Browning—a live one, who couldn't be shut up by clapping the covers together when he got too deep.

"Yes, yes, indeed," she murmured, with a telling accent and a vague expression.

They were by now in hearing distance of Mary, and her clear voice reached them in the words:

"Don't move your legs, Mr. Macalester. I'm looking at the land-

scape. Those gray trousers are regular panels, and frame the view beautifully."

Eugene glanced angrily, but it was against human nature not to laugh at the spectacle presented. Macalester, the club Arbiter Elegantium, with his strong, ugly face and long, graceful, elegantly clad figure, stood with his feet planted wide like a Colossus of Rhodes, and waited in perfect seriousness the further command of royalty.

"Mac's lost his head," growled Urmson.

"Yes," said his companion, very low; "and his heart."

He turned and looked sharply at her—the physician in him all alert.

"Are you ill, Miss Arthur?"

"Wait a moment; do not attract attention to me. I—perhaps I had better tell you. It—it's not announced—but Mr. Macalester and I—were—to—to have been married."

"Were to have been!" repeated Urmson in consternation.

He looked from Nellie Arthur's face—pale and drawn now, with an emotion undeniably real, however sordid it might be—to Macalester, the rich catch she was losing, whose face he could now see, flushed and excited, bent toward Mary, and revealing an infatuation as passionate as it had been sudden.

"We will go on, please," said the girl. "I can trust you to—to respect my confidence."

He pressed her hand silently.

"Hurry up, slow pokes!" called Mary. "The grub's ready."

The "grub" was an elaborate luncheon, champagne iced to perfection, and a choice menu, containing a salad for which the club was famous, *paté* and many *recherche* dishes, the club colors and the national flag decorating the table, and rustic chairs drawn up for the banqueters.

"It's swell!" declared Mary, running toward them. Suddenly she looked at her lover with one of her lightning transformations of mood. "Eugene! Aren't you going to take me in? If you don't, I can't sit beside you," she panted like a little tigress, almost pushing Miss Arthur's soft hand from his arm.

"Oh, come, now, honors are easy. A fair exchange is no robbery," laughed Macalester, who had followed, an undercurrent of deeper meaning in his words, and offering to draw Mary to his side.

Urmson glanced at him with angry significance.

"Perhaps you will escort Miss Arthur," he said.

"Thank you, no. I prefer walking alone," the girl murmured so quietly that only Urmson realized how much her words implied. Macalester had made a half-hearted attempt to accompany her,

but soon stopped to wait for Mary, so that Eugene, who in other circumstances would have taken up the gage for Miss Arthur, dared not say a word, lest the other make it a pretext for forcing the exchange he had proposed. The lover of a queen has not much latitude for showing interest in distressed damsels; his position is too much coveted to be safely left open. So it came about that Mary again outraged the sensibilities of the chaperon by appearing at the board with an escort at right and left.

That was a merry luncheon. The champagne got into Mary's eyes and cheeks. Her "black thatch" fell back, her curls waved their tendrils, prophesying like magic wands the oncoming rain. She might have enjoyed the long white table, the atmosphere of elegance and merriment—even the waiters in their white coats, the beautiful service, the exquisite food, were novelties sufficient to delight her—had not Macalester—who had never had anything but his own way since he was born—suavely juggled the seating arrangements so that no chair was left Dr. Urmson save the one beside Nellie Arthur. From it he sombrely glowered across at his fiancée; while she in turn felt jealousy tug at her heart-strings as she looked at Miss Arthur, calm, cool, correct. She endured it as long as she could; but finally the quick, passionate temper began to flame as she observed his seeming complaisance.

"I'll make him feel what it's like," she vowed, and, kissing a glass, held it coquettishly for Macalester to drink from the spot, at the same time closing one eye in so expressive a wink at the college boy on Miss Arthur's other hand that the young fellow turned scarlet and her masculine following burst into roars of irrepressible laughter.

Eugene, ashamed and angry, was almost unconscious of the ejaculation that escaped him, until a voice broke the ensuing silence with: "Don't swear, Urmson."

"Oh, yes; why shouldn't he?" put in Mary, half rising to face an appreciative audience, who now lounged at ease in their chairs. Half a dozen gay replies were flung back at her, each a reason why Urmson should not swear, each more ludicrous, more grotesque, than its predecessor. From this point on, the social mercury mounted. Mary—a child who had played with street urchins—was well able to hold her own in this war of badinage, full of wit, of cleverness, but verging ever nearer and nearer to the *risque*.

These were seasoned society people—rightly seasoned, like their dishes. The ladies knew that there was a time—champagne time—when their wisest tactics of campaign were an indrawal of forces, a bringing up of reserves. Mary was innocent of all this. She thought as the men mellowed their interest increased. To her they

were only jollier. She tossed back their jests and laughter with a child's abandon.

"A toast, a toast!" cried Macalester, leaning toward her. "A kiss on the wishing cup, and luck to the dream that it wakes!"

But Mary was not sentimental; she was only audacious. She sprang to her feet to escape what looked like a threatened caress. Macalester, misreading her intention, caught her hand and lightly swung her upon a chair. The man's face was at her shoulder; laughing, moved by an impulse to avoid the contact, half impelled by the mad spirit that possessed her—the Undine freakishness of the forester's stream-child—she leaped lightly among the flowers and silver of the dismantled board.

"A toast, a toast!" she repeated. Then, raising her voice, she paraphrased with ready wit:

"Here's to the man I respect—may he stay at home!
Here's to the man that respects me—may he stay with him!
Here's to the man I love—may he come often!
Here's to the man that loves me—may he come when the other's away!"

The men were all on their feet, with upraised, clinking glasses, yelling robust approval, admiration, and noisy laughter.

"Get down!" thundered Eugene Urmson, starting toward the girl. He was stopped by a stray spatter of champagne in the eyes.

"Permit me, I'll help you off the table," was Macalester's more courteous offer.

"Go away—I'll jump."

She landed on the toes of the college boy, inadvertently spilling her half-filled glass of champagne down his neck.

"Poor fellow," she mocked, and it began to be plain that the champagne on unaccustomed nerves had wrought its share of her madness—"poor fellow, his little coatie is all wet, and he'll take cold. I'll dose him in advance;" and before young Hammond could defend himself she had stuffed one of the raw oysters into his exclaiming mouth.

"Tastes like a very young cat, doesn't it?" she inquired solicitously.

This was too much. Even the men were afraid to give free rein to their laughter, and slapped the backs of choking friends to relieve themselves. Miss Arthur had come to Eugene's assistance, bathing his smarting eyes with her own handkerchief dipped in ice-water. When he could see again Mary had disappeared.

Well, let her go; Eugene felt that he could not bear much more. His nerves were in that quiver of apprehensive pain which makes neurotic women savage or hysterical. He addressed himself to Nellie

Arthur, and urged her to play, as though he were Saul possessed of devils, and she the David to exorcise them.

The violin was brought out. Miss Arthur selected a position which threw her graceful figure, her fine hands and arms, into beautiful relief, and played for them a peculiar, swift, weird air. Her teaching had been excellent; and if a certain intellectual pose obtruded itself in her music, the achievement was at least sufficiently far above the ordinary amateur to command the admiration of so indulgent an audience.

Responding gracefully to their urgency, the young woman began a performance which she flattered herself was original. In her immaturity of view, the narrow crudeness of a young female born to wealth and station, she would have brought the holy vessels from the altar and filled them with orchids to adorn her dinner table—that she might make the groundlings stare. She now poised her bow above the responsive strings and dashed into the wailing melody of “The Land o’ the Leal”—arranged as a waltz!

The listeners had scarcely all realized just what she was doing when Macalester called their attention to Mary on the terrace above them, her big black hat swinging over her arm, her head crowned with the same scarlet flowers it held, one foot advanced and her skirts slightly lifted as though she would attempt to dance to the music.

“Why, it’s ‘The Land o’ the Leal,’” she said finally. She looked curiously at the violinist. Even as her little foot kept time to the rapid waltz measure she half whispered: “That sounds like racing at a funeral, or ghosts turning summersaults over tombstones.”

Mary had a beautiful, though untrained voice. Catching the rapid beat of the violin tones with breathless accuracy, she began to sing:

“I’m wearin’ awa, Jean,
Like snow wreaths in thaw, Jean;
I’m wearin’ awa to the Land o’ the Leal.”

If Miss Arthur made a dance tune of the music, Mary made a passionate little drama of the words, stretching out her arms, turning her wonderful eyes, which one could have sworn were wet with tears, to that imaginary one whom she addressed. Her feet did not move, but as the beautiful, graceful body fell from pose to pose of eloquent entreaty or despair, while the rich young voice held the rapid pace of the instrument which sustained it, the audience stood breathless with involuntary—and in some cases unwilling—admiration.

When the last pathetic wail died away—Miss Arthur had obligingly lengthened her tempo—

Then heed not my pain, Jean;
This world's care is vain, Jean;
We'll meet and be fain in the Land o' the Leal—

a great shout of applause broke out—and swift upon it a tremendous clap of thunder, followed by the drenching downpour which had been threatening since morning. Even those in the open side of the pavilion were driven to the middle of the structure.

"Come in—come in quick, Miss Scott!" they cried as they scampered laughing to shelter. And none but Eugene Urmson knew that she had not done so. Lingered to flourish a final pirouette, the girl stumbled, fell, and in a moment's space was as drenched as though she had fallen in the sea. Eugene rushed out, snatched her up from the ground, and bore her to shelter. There were loud exclamations of regret, and half the men shed their coats to envelop her dripping form.

"No, no," she protested, laughing; "put 'em on again. You need them as much as I. Besides, I'm so wringing wet, those things would fade all over me."

"But you must put on something," expostulated Eugene, frowning at the revelation of her close clinging wet draperies; "and the wraps are all in the boat."

"Very well," said Mary, who understood most things by intuition, and resented alike her lover's unspoken implication of immodesty and the crimping nostrils of his women friends. "Then, like Godiva, I will clothe myself in patriotism;" and she dragged at the large flag on the wall behind her. The subservient Macalester hastened to cut it loose from its fastenings with his knife, and young America triumphed in stars and stripes.

"There's no warmth in that thing, and I'm afraid you're wet through," said Eugene anxiously.

"Oh, I don't mind it a bit; I've always hankered to get as wet as water'd make me with my clothes on. Mother's spanked me many a time for getting back in the bath-tub after she'd dressed me." She looked about on almost openly contemptuous faces, and went on in a louder voice: "This is glo—ho—rious! I believe I'll duck myself again," and, like a flash, was away from them, and out in the flooding rain. Her mood of hurt pride had hardened into perversity.

She plucked handfuls of dripping goldenrod, and, waving them above her head, ran hither and thither through the storm, shouting merrily:

"Glorious—glorious! My! but this is fun!"

"Mary," said Urmson, putting up an umbrella as he hurried out of the pavilion, to bring her back by force if necessary—"Mary, come here. This may prove a dangerous frolic."

She waited until he reached her, then, tipping his umbrella against the wind, gave him a mischievous push and ran away, without knowing that cavalier and parachute rolled together on the soaked ground. He rose, furious. As he gathered himself and his broken umbrella together, the sun with incredible suddenness burst forth like a broad grin over his bedraggled appearance, and the laughter of his companions greeted him on all sides.

"The rain is over, Gene," laughed Macalester. "Go hang yourself up to dry."

"The rain is not over," said Eugene, glad to quarrel with him on any subject. "See how the smoke from the boat beats straight down. Listen to the wind. We'd better go home while times are good."

"You are quite right," approved the quiet voice of Miss Arthur. "The rain is not over, and it is nearly four o'clock."

The party now rose and began preparations for leaving the charmed wood where every leaf cup held a diamond, and drops of gold slipped down shining tree trunks. Urmson seized Mary's drenched arm and hurried ahead.

"You are sure to be sick," he began irritably. "Your feet are soaking."

"Well, there is not much of them to catch cold in," babbled the wild creature, regarding those members. "Besides, what's water, any way? Isn't my body three-quarters water? Isn't the air we breathe mostly evaporated frog pond? Don't men die for lack of liquids sooner than solids?"

"Mary, Mary!" he broke in on her. "Look at your dress—how that flag has faded on it!"

"Oh, Gene!" It was a heart-broken cry, for the frock was a mess of national colors.

"Don't take it like that, dear. Why, sweetheart!"

"Oh, I can't bear it! Gene, do you think it will wash out? Gene, Gene, it's our wedding dress, and I can't afford another; and next month—— Oh, it was mean of the flag of a great big, powerful nation to fade all over a little girl's wedding dress!"

They were skirting a small cliff, on their way to the steps, as the girl spoke. She tore loose from him and stood a moment, quivering. They were alone. The laughing picnickers were scattering toward the beach by another route. Her voice had mounted almost to a scream. Urmson's nerves jangled terribly to the sound. "Hush!" he said bitterly. "You make me ashamed."

A wild look came over the lovely face. "Ashamed!" she echoed.

"You think *I* ought to be ashamed. You don't know— Oh, it's all horrible! I wish I was dead! Those girls—oh! And now my dress—and—and you——! I'll *be* dead!" And quietly, yet like a flash, she stepped past him and dropped over the cliff edge.

He knew the water below was far over her bright head, and when he heard the splash which told him she had actually fallen—or flung herself in—with one despairing shout to the others he ran around the rocks, tearing off coat, necktie, collar, vest, as he raced. His feet beat time to his heart—almost. Once his boot caught, flinging him down a ravine, up which he toiled bruised and torn.

During this small delay Mary was rescued by one of the boat's crew. Standing on the deck, she saw Urmson burst into the group at the landing-place and heard him cry the alarm. For when he came in sight of the water he had seen only a flag caught on a floating branch. The brief, fitful sunshine had again darkened, and a fine white rain misted above the sullen river, adding to the horror of his emotions. Then he heard laughing voices; some one called his name.

"Hurry, the storm's on us! We're going to catch it!" roared Macalester.

"Mary!" cried Urmson wildly. "My God!—she's in the river! Up above," and he pointed. "She fell off the cliff!" He looked beside himself, half longing to plunge in after her, not knowing what direction to take—a very desperate lover!

"Oh, crickety, Gene Urmson—what's the matter? Are you thinking of going swimming? What you wearing your necktie streaming out behind for?" It was Mary's voice—Mary at her worst—but most welcome to him then. He looked toward the boat; on the deck stood the beautiful, dripping girl, her sodden curls and close-clinging garments in strange contrast to the brilliant color in her excited face.

"Thank heaven!" he exclaimed fervently.

"Who put her in?" screamed Mary above the wind. "Gene, 'twas a sin. Who pulled her out? A sailor stout."

Urmson rushed aboard.

"How could you have been so careless—so reckless? What shall I do with you? You must have dry clothes now—you must, I say—you're drenched and freezing!"

"Wear anything that belongs to one of those women—let them laugh and sneer because I've got no wrap? I'd rather die!" she cried, in sudden fury.

"Go down to the cabin at once"—in his desperation he spoke brutally. "Here they all come—you're not fit to be seen. Frances is there—she has wraps——"

"I won't. They've already seen me soaking—what's the use?"

He was at the end of everything. He could have struck her. He was turning away with a gesture of despair when some one pointed and cried out strangely; he wheeled, leaped to her, only just in time to catch her as she fell. The mad excitement, the chill wind and water, but most of all the corrosive emotions—anger, humiliation, fierce resentment—which impelled her to wild acts, had done their work. In his arms rested a shivering, blue-lipped child, deathly pale, black hollows around her glazing eyes.

V.

THEY carried poor Mary down to the warm cabin, and there, all throughout the trip home, Eugene worked over her, physician and lover.

On reaching the city he bore her in his arms to a closed carriage, and, leaning on his breast, she came home to the little cottage in Memory Lane. When he placed her on the small white bed in the Scotts' parlor, his tears dewed her pillow.

"Dear Eugene," she whispered faintly, "don't feel bad. I'm so sorry for you."

For many nights thereafter, while his partner worked faithfully within, young Dr. Urmson paced up and down the street outside her window, sentineling the spot, listening for her delirious cries, watching the moving forms silhouetted against her curtain. He dared not trust his own skill where his heart was so deeply moved; yet at daybreak he returned to her side, looking down passionately on this stricken blossom tossing on dark waters, being borne swiftly—whither? Of all this Mary knew nothing.

Privacy and quiet were not the sick girl's portion. Like her royal namesake, when direful pains attacked her delicate limbs in prison, no luxury assuaged the affliction. In the little front room she lay, no hall intervening between her bed and the street door. Curious neighbors, whispering huskily, scanned her without hindrance. The first words to pierce her delirium, three weeks after the day when she was brought home, were those of "the woman of the opposite yard."

"Reckon them sores on her face'll heal?"

Mary opened conscious eyes—how hot and swollen they were! She touched her cheek, which felt painfully rough. Instinctively she tried to veil herself with her long curls—her head was shaven!

The room was not darkened, and oh, the horror of those curious eyes full upon her!

"Wonder if she's comin' to," whispered a second voice. "My! ain't she a sight! Can't they bandage 'em? Awful, ain't it?"

"Father, father!"

In the hour of that awakening every instinct cried out for the friend she had never before appreciated, the gentle old scholar whose life had ever orb'd above his turbulent, ill-disciplined offspring. The wildness of her tone and gesture alarmed the gossips.

"I do believe she understood you, Miz' Peters," said the first woman. "She's goin' to have a fit—or—or somethin'. Call her pa. She wants him!" And Alfred Scott came to the Queen, and laid his head on her pillow, his tears falling on the hand she gave him.

"Tears of joy, Mary, tears of pure joy!" he said.

"Are you glad I didn't die, daddy?"

He clasped her swollen fingers silently. Was he glad!

"What's been the matter?"

"A strange fever and nerve complication. You had been under much excitement, and the contraction of a sudden cold completed the mischief. You must lie quiet now. See how weak you are." And, indeed, she lost herself in sleep as he spoke.

When she roused again, Myrtle sat by her.

"What made you cut my hair?" asked Mary suddenly.

"We couldn't help it. Your face was so bad, and the hair irritated it."

"My face? What's the matter with my face?"

"We don't know, Mary. It broke out all over about a week after you were taken sick. Don't talk, sis. You mustn't."

Again she drifted into semi-consciousness. From that time convalescence progressed like a series of nightmares, and through it all she continually reached a groping hand, searching for the lost curls to veil the face so many looked upon and shuddered at.

"Oh, can't you cover it?" she begged her physician, sturdy Dr. Bright, young Urmson's senior partner. "Every one looks at me!"

"Bandages would increase the irritation. Get strong, and you can soon be moved to another room."

"Oh, I can't bear this—to be looked at now! And I can't hide my face! I put my hands over it, but I sleep and they fall away, and I wake with people standing around my bed."

"No one but your immediate family should be permitted to see you, child. I'll speak with your mother. I'll turn these chattering people out in a way they'll remember."

Alas, poor dethroned Queen! Poverty is as cruel as Elizabeth, and even less conscientious than those Englishmen who loved the Scottish flower they trampled down. The physician's fiat avails little where necessity rules. In the Scotts' home there were two sleeping rooms—two made out of one by a rude partition—the larger overflowing with the twins and their parents; the boys who happened

to be at home packed some way in the smaller. Betsey and Myrtle occupied a folding bed in the dining-room; Mary had the parlor lounge. News of the strange disease afflicting Mary Scott had aroused the morbid curiosity of the neighborhood, and acquaintances brought their friends to see the disfigurement of a beauty. Where was refuge to be found from prying eyes?

Outside, May day, with all its joyous spirit-revival of the delights and loves of springs long blossomless, had come and gone. The happy, happy dawn of summer was here. There was a cheerful stir abroad. One of the saddest sounds to the young, in sickness, is the hoofs of horses, because they symbolize what is passing by and going away, all the outdoor rush, the impetus of life, the lovers of the *last ride*, and of a first ride—all out there, borne by on the steady schoof, schoof, schoof, of the hoofs—borne past and away! Mary, lying there in the front room, felt as though they beat on her heart.

"And is it really May?" asked the May bride that should have been.

"Yes, Queenie."

It was Sunday, and Betsey, crunching jet as she moved, had taken Myrtle's place as nurse.

"Betsy, aren't people sometimes married in bed?"

Betsey averted her eyes.

"I told Gene May was an unlucky month for marrying," she went on, "but he said I should be a May Queen bride and break the ill-omen. So I gave in. I never was superstitious, any way; and I don't see why I'm not well enough to go on and be married this month, as long as everything's planned. If I wait to get up, I'll have to have a new dress. Mine was just ruined with that old flag. Next time Eugene comes, I want to see him. I don't understand why he shouldn't come in, the same as Dr. Bright. If you people had suffered as much as I have, you wouldn't think so of what's proper."

Betsey did not speak. How could she tell the poor girl that Eugene had not asked to see her since the development of the eruption had rendered repulsive her lovely face. He had been first to detect its approach, arguing with Dr. Bright that it was as certainly incurable as it was rare, and he still refused to view the ruin it had wrought. From childhood he had inordinately admired beauty, and shrank with abhorrence from the unsightly and the disfigured. His love for Mary could not surmount such destruction as had befallen the fairness he cherished. As a physician, he was in despair over the case; for the fever following her sudden chill, he believed, had developed a slumbering scrofulous taint in her blood—the same, he declared, that afflicted her sister Myrtle. He was generous with money; himself he would not give. He had summoned to her aid

the ablest medical assistance, telegraphing to other cities for physicians, and corresponding with foreign specialists. But from all who had gathered around the unconscious girl, and brought their wisdom to bear on her affliction, there was one verdict only.

"We can do nothing," the spokesman of the last consultation had said. "Life is not in danger. The ulcerations may heal after a time, though not without leaving ineradicable scars. There have been somewhat similar cases known in European hospitals; a few patients of modern times, afflicted with a resembling trouble, have pledged their physicians and attendants to secrecy. We think the girl will not die—but she is disfigured for life."

Eugene Urmson assented to this verdict. He sought no disquieting hope from the fact that neither himself nor any one of the physicians who gave it had ever personally treated an exactly similar case. A disfigured Mary, with a scarred, discolored face—it was grotesquely like the dead walking, and he sheered abruptly away from that tragedy in the making. With the words, the Mary of Eugene's love died to him, and what remained above earth in her stead became mere uncoffined mortality, a corpse of love from which all his nature shrank.

He decided against her at arm's length. He took no comfort from the assurance that the woman's life was not in danger. How dared she live on, miserable, when that which he loved—her beauty—was dead!

But who was to tell Mary this? Betsey knew that it must be told. The patient was now too rational to be put off with subtuges, but far from realizing her condition and its possible effect on her lover.

"Why doesn't Eugene come?" she asked. "Has anything happened to him? Tell me the truth, is Eugene sick?"

Betsey had little command of consoling phrases. She walked crunching to the mantel and back.

"Mary, I want to leave you alone five minutes. By counting sixty five times, you can tell how long I'm gone, and keep yourself out of mischief."

Straight to the scholar, humped unhappily over his Virgil, marched the business manager of the family.

"Father, here is street-car fare. Go to Eugene Urmson and tell him he is a rascal and a fool;" and a jet crunched under her quick-stepping foot (it may be said here that she industriously replaced the lost beads on week-days).

"Betsey—I—I understand," said the scholar.

"Suspense is worse than the scaffold. Mary doesn't have to suffer that; nobody ought to. 'Tisn't fair to have the pain of dread,

and the thing we dreaded, both come to pass. It doesn't often happen that way, either. We—you can spare Mary—the—the waiting for it."

"For 'it'?"

"Oh, he may prove true coin, but I doubt it. Handsome men are handy with their consciences; they can do 'most anything with them. Eugene is quite likely to say he's too poor to marry right now, or too busy; and Mary'll have to hear it sooner or later. That's what I meant by 'it.'"

"Betsey!" called Mary's changed voice. "Please come bathe my face; it smarts so."

The elder sister cast a meaning look back over her shoulder as she went in obedience to the pathetic summons. Alfred Scott did not seek the Queen's recreant lover, but he did appeal to Dr. Bright, making of him the inquiry:

"Would it be injudicious at the présent time, in your opinion, to permit an interview between Mary and Dr. Urmson?"

"Do you still expect Urmson to marry her?" asked the older physician, with an abrupt forcing to light of the real issue.

Alfred Scott shook his gray head. "Not that. I understand that he must shrink from such a union. The higher powers impel man through his instincts to shun, in mating, the misshapen and afflicted. This is a law merciful to the coming generations. Æneas, a good man, was led by divine imperative to forsake Dido, in the interest of future dynasties. But one who is brave as well as good does not steal away in the night quite like Æneas. He spares the forsaken endurance of that hope deferred which maketh the heart sick. Dr. Urmson should visit my daughter and talk plainly with her."

"You are right, and he shall."

But when his partner later interviewed him, Eugene shuddered away from the proposition. "It's impossible," he declared. "Have I not suffered enough? You tell her, Bright. Explain to her that she'll never be fit for marriage—or get one of her folks to do it. What do you want me to say to her?"

"That I cannot tell you; but I do tell you that your duty is to go to her and make your position clear in a personal interview. There is no need to inflict unnecessary suffering on the girl or her family; you'll make a tremendous mistake if you shirk this thing. I shall do no talking for you." And the gray-haired physician looked sternly at his junior.

"Perhaps—it may be a question of honor. Well, I will go," Urmson conceded. He groaned, and the sweat of shame and acute distress glistened on his forehead.

"Have you no sympathy for this poor soul?" demanded Bright

sharply. "Gene, do you never think of anybody but yourself?"

"Soul!" echoed Urmson half unconsciously. "I often thought Mary Scott had no soul. A beautiful body—with which she was not fit to be trusted—she had. She ruined it, and ruined my life and hers, out of mere caprice. When she was in health she made me a butt of ridicule among my friends by her improprieties. She trampled on much that is necessary to my esteem for woman. I could not respect, even when I loved her. No rational girl would have gone out on such a chill, threatening day in thin muslin, without any protection against the weather. No really modest girl would have insisted on standing dripping wet in the wind before a crowd of men. But I will go and see her, since you insist. You may make an engagement for me."

"Engagement!" echoed Bright angrily. "I'm going to the house now; if you are willing to do so, come with me."

"Oh, well, with you, or professionally, I shall not mind seeing her." Eugene tried to envelop himself in the armor of his clinic attitude and manner.

"Gene, you try my patience. You must see her alone. An invited witness to such an interview would be an insult to that poor child."

"You will go in ahead and speak to her for me—hint at the truth?" persisted Urmson.

"I will prepare her a bit, if such a thing is possible," conceded the elder man. "I can at least administer a sedative. It's bound to be a dreadful shock. She believes in you implicitly. She has no inkling of your defection. She even talks with her family of having the marriage take place in her bedroom."

"My God!"

"You see, she believed man's love went deeper than the lips—a woman's affection has been known to cling even to the leper."

Eugene was silent. He had lost the silken fineness of the fashionable young physician. His face was unshaven, his tie carelessly arranged; he looked pale and overwrought.

The two walked in silence up Memory Lane, and to the little Scott home. It had been Dr. Bright's intention to prepare Mary as much as possible for the coming ordeal, but Myrtle met him at the door of the room with the startling information:

"Mary knows Dr. Urmson is with you—she recognized his step, I think. Won't he please come in at once? She's so excited."

"I am ready," said Eugene, in a low tone.

Betsey, the practical, was not on guard, and the timid, frightened

Myrtle lacked courage to remain with Mary at the lovers' first interview.

"Go right in," she whispered tremulously. "She—Mary wants to see you alone. I'll wait out here with Dr. Bright."

He entered the desecrated shrine of his heart's first idol. The pretty curtains had been taken down, and all the dainty fancies of a girl's fashioning removed, to give way to the paraphernalia of a sick-room.

On the low bed he saw a human figure with face of unnatural size, covered with unsightly eruptions. Lustreless eyes peered up at him from red rims. Not one soft curl adorned the poor head, shaven to a semblance of baldness. Physician as he was, Eugene Urnson could not realize on whom he was looking. He found himself, mechanically, taking a professional interest in so novel a case; and Mary saw her lover regarding her with an estranging curiosity.

She had intended to receive him in a darkened room, but the rickety shutters of the cottage were not capable of such mercy; the shades went up and down on eccentric impulses of their own; and at the sound of his step all else had been forgotten in her joy and Myrtle's distress.

"Oh, Eugene!" cried the poor girl. "How I have wanted you! There's something the matter with my face, but I know you can cure it when we are married and you can doctor me yourself." (She had thought only the proprieties were to blame in keeping him away!) "I've had such a dreadful time," she hurried on, pouring all her griefs out to the loved one. "They look at me, and then they cry. Those they let in here when they thought I was out of my head used to carry on as if the sight of me nearly killed them."

After a moment, as he did not speak, she went on:

"But I knew you would come, dear, and you can cure me. I couldn't have lived without that hope. I love you so! You're all I've got in the world, Gene. Take me away from here, sweetheart. Take care of me. You can cure me," came ever the piteous repetend. "I can't bear to have people look at me so. Oh, it seems so long since you held me in your arms and called me your own Queen Mary! Hold me so again. Hold me tight—so tight; then the pain and fear can't get to me."

Hold her in his arms—caress her! A sudden grimness of repressible disgust twitched at his lip.

"Eugene—dearest—what—what is it?" she cried more wildly. "Tell me! Don't drive me mad! Come here quick! Oh, comfort me, speak to me, dear!" Then in a sort of whisper: "*He's still*

standing there. Oh, I never thought of this! Why didn't some one tell me I was dead, and Gene still alive?"

"You are not dead," said Urmson, alarmed for her reason. "Be quiet, Mary, and talk with me calmly."

"Calmly! Calmly!" and she burst into fearful laughter.

"Mary," said he, with all the sternness he could assume, "if you do not control yourself, I shall leave the room."

"No, no," she begged pitifully. "Don't go. I'll be good, Eugene. I'll do what you say. I know, though all the world failed, you'll be true. Only, just for a moment, you looked so strange, and—Eugene, you don't come near me."

"Mary, I feel the sincerest sympathy for you."

A long silence followed this admirable speech. Finally the poor girl on the bed said brokenly:

"Why, Gene, this is May—our wedding month!"

"I regret the circumstances that prevent the consummation of our engagement. It is true that you were, nominally, under my care when the deplorable accident leading to this catastrophe occurred; but I can hardly feel myself to blame. If you had been influenced by me—— We will not speak of that."

He enveloped his meaning in a vain fog of words; but Mary understood. A surging as of many waters was in her ears. She lay so mute and lifeless that Urmson thought her overcome by physical weakness, and was about to summon her sister, when she spoke to him with a strange calm.

"No, we will not speak of that. It was all my fault. You were not to blame. I don't want you to worry, Eugene."

"No," said Urmson, looking down; "I do not feel called upon to add the responsibility of that day to my other regrets."

Mary raised herself feebly and looked long at her beloved. "Eugene, I believe this is the first time you were ever perfectly honest with me. I—there's no danger that you'll practise any deceit now. You are indifferent enough to tell me the exact truth. Answer me, then: shall I ever get well?"

"According to all human probability, you will, Mary. Your general health promises to return with all its former robustness."

"Will—will I look like this always?"

"That I am not competent to answer. The—the chances seem that way."

She caught her breath. She had never suspected this. Then a cry broke from her lips.

"Oh, Eugene! With your love, I could have borne worse."

"The affections are not controllable," he said, bitterly resenting the misery she thrust upon him. "They rule us—not we them."

Again Mary lay for long, silent. Then, against her will, and in a voice drowned with grief and shame and despair, she asked the poor, bald question: "Eugene, are you going to break our engagement?"

Shamed and stung in his turn, he struck back hard.

"Are you in a condition to fulfil it? Could a man take you for his wife?"

"No, Eugene, no. I guess I've been making believe you were an angel instead of a man."

"What are you doing?" he cried out in alarm, at a sudden convulsive movement.

"Trying to take off your ring. My hand is all swollen—you'll have to help me."

She saw him shrink. "It is not necessary—I do not want the trinket," he said hastily.

"Nor I," said Mary. "It can only make me think of you; and that I must learn not to do, if I can."

To this he made no reply.

"Eugene, there is nothing more in life for me. You filled it, and you are going out of it." Resolutely the poor wrecked child held her voice steady. "Maybe I deserve such a punishment; but, Eugene, I—I'm afraid I can't"—still piteously steadying the poor weak voice—"can't quite bear it if you don't help me—just a little. I'm afraid I'll have to go mad, or—or die in some dreadful frenzy, if you can't just smooth out a little of the horror of it—take away the fiery—fiery sting—give me a—a—one little kind, comforting thing to remember of you."

Eugene Urmson was terribly moved. Mary saw that—she felt it. Gathering her poor strength together again, she went on mildly:

"Won't you say something gentle before you go? I've been a foolish, reckless girl, but I never meant to do wrong. I wasn't cross at home, or mean with other girls. I never told falsehoods, or failed to keep my word; and I never slighted my sewing. I didn't make fun of old or crippled people, and I was good to children. And, Eugene, I never, never kissed any man but you. I felt bad at the picnic because I hadn't a yachting suit, like the others, and I tried to show 'em I didn't care—when I did care dreadfully—dreadfully. But it doesn't seem to me I've done much to make God angry. I didn't know I looked so bad when I wanted you to come and see me. I never thought about not getting over the breaking out on my face; I know now that you cannot marry me. Some one else will be your wife; but won't you just take my hand and help me off with the ring, and say, 'Good-by. Mary,' in your sweet, kind way? I've heard

you speak so—so gently, so considerately, to servants—negroes—poor common creatures, even those that were troubling you, Eugene; and I loved you more for it. Won't you—I—I——” The soft, low, hesitating voice failed. There was silence for a long minute. “Oh, I want something kind to remember this day by.”

He longed to do her wish—his heart ached with the pity of it all; but take that swollen hand, risk a sudden impulse of tenderness in that piteous caricature of his beautiful Mary!

His desire for escape from a torture of spirit so unbearable and so debasing, from a position in which he writhed to know he cut so poor a figure before the eyes of the All Merciful, now overcame all other emotions.

“Good by, Mary,” he said, struggling to conceal his aversion and his haste to be gone. “Believe me, no one can possibly regret more than I your unfortunate condition. I shall always think of you kindly.” He glanced about him desperately. No good angel inspired him. “It is a beautiful day; I hope you will soon be out in the sunshine. Good afternoon.”

The door opened and closed. He was gone. The door was closed—her love shut out. Health and beauty, anticipated wealth, happiness, and love—all swept away at one stroke! She heard her little brothers crying with rage, and her mother placidly scolding them. A coal man outside swore at his mules, and beat them. The torn shade at one window let the garish sun into the sick-room. All that is rasping and humdrum in life's mechanism squeaked from end to end of her little island of existence. Terrible thoughts assailed her. Panting and feverish, hovering on the verge of insanity, she raised herself upright, and, her engagement ring coming off at last, she flung it violently against the door, and shrieked with laughter—a wild, woful vision of ruin.

The little amulet slipped uneasily on its chain above her heart. She lifted her hand and clutched it unconsciously, and, “My God, show me—show me—show me the way!” burst in agony from her lips. “Only show me—I can bear it, whatever it is, if I can but see,” she babbled, her wide, desolate gaze on vacancy; when suddenly the motes in the sunlight—the sunlight itself—the very air of the room—began to take form and color and expression. A face grew and shaped itself before her; eyes that looked into hers with fathomless kindness, firm lips which parted for no speech, yet sent to the innermost core of her spent and fordome being messages of such hope and comfort and assurance as she could not have deemed possible.

Still with unconscious fingers pressed hard upon the amulet, she gazed; the nebulous face looked back at her; and peace grew

and throve between them. It was not an old face, nor a woman's face; yet the stricken girl upon the bed could not have told why it gave her hope, nor how her soul knew that this was the way which she had asked to be shown. Like a crystal gazer, self hypnotized, she continued to stare into those courage-giving, life-renewing eyes till her own lids drooped, her hand fell away from the amulet, and she slept.

VI.

THE boys' room, a dark, poor place partitioned off from an original dormitory, without carpet or papering, proved a welcome refuge to the dethroned Queen. So might the young leper stricken at her bridal have fled to ancient tombs. Lying in her bed there, Mary saw from the one window only the tops of trees. One night that fall an early frost touched the leaves, and she saw them in a silver, shimmering radiance.

"How full the sky is of stars!" she exclaimed; then paused, realizing what glories common and familiar things may take on when one's outlook is limited. Again, as she watched the swaying green boughs, they seemed waving to acquaintances stationed on the battlements of clouds. In the framing of that small back window she beheld morning climb above the stars; she saw the twilight steal, crepuscular and faintly lavendered, to net the radiance in her mist, and felt that never before had she seen these things. Truly, life is worth living, after all, when just tree-tops are so beautiful!

It had been feared that a crippling affection of the hip-joint might ensue, but she was spared that, and by the end of autumn she could walk about. She celebrated this mercy by tottering into her mother's room to a mirror. She had often drawn her hands down the changed surface of her cheeks; but she was not prepared for what she saw. They heard her shriek, and hurried in, to find her lying senseless, the broken looking-glass beside her on the floor.

"Oh!" she cried, when consciousness returned, "God won't let anything so dreadful last long! This is His earth. I am one of His children whom He bade the disciples feed. He knows all about me, doesn't He? Perhaps the angels of mercy are busy—there's so much for them to do—but my turn will come, and they will heal me. Won't they, mother? Don't you think they will?"

From that on, she shut herself strictly in the small back room, admitting only her mother and sisters, shrinking even from her father in the daytime. Neighbors cast looks of almost superstitious interest at that closed door. The boys ceased their loud talk in passing it. Alfred Scott roamed abroad, carrying with him his small blue book, to find vivid boughs in the autumn wood to cheer that lonely place.

She could not go out to fit and plan the wonderful costumes for which she used to be paid so well; but a few of her old patrons sent her plain sewing to do, at which she and Myrtle toiled together.

"I'm a mere automaton, like the works of a clock, that never see the light," she said of herself; "and I think my heart has turned gray, as hair turns suddenly gray from fright."

Her old recklessness of speech had passed from her with her laughter. It would have been profanation to the depths now stirred in her nature. But from the "dead self" of her lighter-hearted hours, a new, strong personality was evolving.

Sometimes at night, heavily veiled, she ventured out on the street with Betsey or her father, walking always toward Eugene Urmson's home. Once, as she passed it on the dark side of the walk, she saw him run blithely up the wide stone steps; afterward, she went that way no more. The experience had been too cruel. But she searched the society columns for his name, and frequently read of his attendance at social functions where the name of Miss Nellie Arthur also figured; so that, hearing music at night, she imagined him beside that other one, waltzing with her slender form in his arms, or leaning in delight to listen to her violin.

"Eugene must admire Miss Arthur," she said, with trembling lips.

"He's her very shadow!" came back resentfully from Myrtle. "She can't stir without him. After breaking off with Mr. Macalester, she had a slow fever, and Gene Urmson was her physician; since then she can twist him around her little finger." Mary's sorrows seemed so like her own to the poor helpless sister, that she often discussed them with a cruelly bitter frankness. Now the stricken girl winced in silence.

As the Christmas holidays approached, invitations were issued, by Mrs. Dutton, for the marriage of her orphan niece, Helen Adelaide Arthur, to Doctor Eugene Templeton Urmson, December sixteenth, at the Church of All Saints—the church in whose shadow he and Mary had so often lingered. Mary counted the days "with her heart" to her old lover's wedding night. She could not bear Myrtle's mention of her lost happiness; she could not weep, or force her lips to frame a prayer to Heaven for help in this time of anguish.

At last it came, that dreadful day. As the evening closed softly down, with a kind of tenderness and regret in it, one of the twins injured a portion of his anatomy, and Mrs. Scott prepared for a night of poultices. Betsey and Myrtle, their hearts bleeding in sympathy with Mary, cajoled their older brothers out for a walk. Alfred Scott dozed behind his Virgil. The front room seemed deserted when a muffled figure stole furtively from its door.

The moon had not yet risen, and the streets were dark, save where artificial lights spread arcs of false splendor. White lined carriages containing the bridesmaids, snowy visions with laps of flowers, passed Mary, as she slipped by in the darkness. It seemed to her, as she crouched at last in the black shade of a tree at the vestry door, as if the radiance of earth and heaven had concentrated in the gold effulgence flowing, a broad road, from the church door to the white-hearted carriages—concentrated there, leaving all who were unbidden to the wedding feast forever exiled to the chill and murk of outer night. A turnout whirled down a side street and drew up with a flourish at the vestry door, almost within touch of Mary's hand, where she stood; the bridegroom and his best man stepped from it. The driver moved on a bit, and Eugene Urmson, dark and handsome in his wedding garments, looked up at the quiet skies.

"What a night it will be when the moon comes out!" he smiled to his friend. "Behold the heavens veiled as a bride who concealeth her face until the moon, her bridegroom, cometh."

Young Peyton clapped him on the shoulder and laughed.

"Marriage will cure you of your mooning, Gene."

"Not with the wife I've chosen. If I were marrying for mere outward beauty, Jim, it might prove different, but my Nellie is as beautiful in spirit as in feature. We were made for each other. She has the same fancies that you heathens jeer at in me. I tell you, our life will pass like an idyl.

"What's that?" added Eugene, a shadow touching his mood. "I thought I heard somebody. Let's go in, Jim."

The vestry door closed on the two young men. The empty carriage drove away. Alone in the shadow Mary knelt.

The place was very quiet. A glow permeated the listening air by the windows. She fell, kneeling, against the tree-trunk, her desolate gaze traversing the street where Eugene had so often stopped her on their homeward way to take his "Light o' Roses" in his arms, beneath the shadow of the church. Then loud music crashed out; Mary knew that in its echoes moved a vision of bridal fairness down the aisle, between the well-content seated among flowers and palms in seas of brilliant light.

She did not see the wedding procession emerge. Crouching with hidden face in the grass, she heard the carriages roll away, heard the music sink to silence. She stood up; the old church was dark and lonely, too, the gladness of its heart had also passed away. Should she go home to Memory Lane? The small back room, littered with the day's sewing, and impressed with painful memories, had nothing to soothe or help. The moon was coming up, making the

streets so bright that she feared them. Where should she carry her pain, hide her shamed despair? There was a place, down by the river—the water, gray like a face in pain, called. No such temptation had assailed her before leaving home. But she was half mad now.

"It's no use struggling," she thought drearily. "I—oh, I can't struggle any more!"

She gained safety from inspection in a cliff-sheltered spot by the silvering river.

"It can't be a sin," she whispered. "Life is so hard; and when one is no use, why should one live? The river laps, laps—it has a kissing sound; it will kiss me while Eugene holds his wife in his arms—his Nellie! Oh, if only he hadn't said that! He will love her so. I know——"

With a soft, shivering moan, she stepped quickly out on an old raft, a soggy, rotting corpse, once fresh and verdant with wood-life. Her hand went to her throat, and closed convulsively upon the amulet. "God," she said just under her breath, "I'm coming home to you. I couldn't stay—it was too hard. *You know—you'll* forgive me. Show me—show me——"

Her slender young body crouched to spring; but she never made the leap. Out of the moonlight, now almost bright as day, a face grew before her fixed, desolate gaze; eyes of unfathomable kindness and comfort looked into hers; through all her weary, beaten, broken being stole a sense of assuagement—peace beyond measure; and, most marvelous of all, a wavering hope that beckoned back to life.

"God—has—answered," she whispered. "The face of the amulet!"

As she spoke, her hand dropped to her side; the face dislimned in the air. As one awaking in alarm, she reeled, stumbled back to the shore, and fell on her knees.

"Oh, what was I going to do? Oh, God help me—help me—help me!"

"Amen."

She sprang up to see only a bent old man standing on the shore, a small blue book suspended from the hands clasped at his back.

"Father, oh, father!"

"It's a beautiful night," said Alfred Scott, controlling a trembling voice. "The moon is a poet, and idealizes even a wornout raft decaying on the shore."

"Father, were you watching me? Did—did you see me on the raft?"

"Not if you would rather I hadn't, dear."

"Oh, you know, you know! Why don't you upbraid, curse me, ask if I had forgotten you, and my mother, and poor Myrtle?"

"Sit down, my child, on this old boat hulk," said the still tremulous voice. "Notice its Rembrandt-like blackness in this wonderful white moonlight."

Mary sat down by him, a veiled, drooping figure beside an old man, and the sweet night lapped them around. Would he talk to her of the comparative beauties among the translators of Virgil, quote Dryden and Connington and the others? He did nothing of the sort. He took her hand and spoke long to her, not as a scholar—a bookworm—but as a human being deeply moved, a father to his loved, suffering child.

It was a very quiet speech withal; yet it had a certain call-to-arms in its gentle sentences; and at its close the listening girl instinctively straightened her shoulders.

"But do you really want me to live, father? What will become of an afflicted creature like me when our home is broken up, as it naturally must be in time? Don't you remember how people looked and whispered over my pillow? How can I go out among them and work for a livelihood?"

He fingered the blue book, mechanically opened its pages, then, resolutely thrusting the volume, like a temptation, behind him, spoke to her once more with tender, father's voice.

"But, father," whispered Mary, when he was done, "I feel that the days I live after this will be wasted ones—worse than wasted, since all of you are so mixed up with me, that I can't go down and down without dragging your hearts after mine."

"My little girl, age smiles at the child who searches, weeping, for a dropped penny; yet few of us live long enough to learn how angels smile over those who, weeping, search for a dropped hope, a lost lover, a little transitory beauty. Immortality is too big, too fine, for crowding with such formalities. Stop and look a little for the trinket, if the heart pleads, and then go on to bigger things."

"What are the bigger things, father?" the tremulous young voice asked.

"God, and books, and 'the quiet above the stars' that is one name for self-control—self-control, the angel that troubles the pool of life and makes it a healing and a blessing. Soldiers think it a privilege to lose life for glory. Women risk more for love. Men invest honor and happiness in the effort to gain rock smelted into coin. Is power to endure worth less than these—is it less worthy to be striven for? I tell you, royalty of soul has its responsibilities. It is not to be happy, not even to make others so, that man exists.

He lives because his life is the kingdom of his soul, and owes it fealty. To destroy and lay waste that kingdom is rebellion; for the soul to consent to the destruction of its God-created abode is blasphemy; man's noblest attribute is the capacity for endurance." He smiled a little. "Your grandmother used to say glue mends more broken cups than tears."

"But if one hasn't glue, if one hasn't anything—oh, father!" The cry of the young voice rang desolately upon the night.

"Get a new cup, little girl—one of the cups the angels bring at sunrise—the cup of a new day."

"To be filled with tears?"

"Or courage, as you like. There is a courage of despair, when hearts are noble and souls are royal."

"You—you haven't mended your cup." She half whispered the cruel words.

His thin old face whitened, but his answer was gentle.

"Like one of Virgil's eclogues, I am a little dull, somewhat unnatural, and better adapted to stroll in the wake of my poet's pastorals than to climb with a Dante on brighter heights."

"Oh, father! I—what could have made me be so brutal? I did not——"

"Never mind, child. I know the root of your offending; and it is a subject on which I have been desirous to approach you. You cannot help being a little warped. No life can go on naturally in the dark. You need the sun."

"Me? Go out in the daytime! In the sun!"

"A distant cousin of our family died of cancer in the face, Mary. She had been very unfortunate. We did not know of her relationship until after her decease; and she died in the county house. No concealment was possible for her. But she wore a mask contrived for her by a merciful physician."

"I'm glad you did not try to talk of this before; but I can think of it to-night. I—I feel as though new strength had come to me. Father, I will make me a mask and wear it under my veil; and I will accustom myself to life, even under such hideous conditions. You care so much for books; you get so much out of them"—wistfully; "do you think I could ever care like that?"

"Care for books—for a world where the turning of a page may reveal the passing of a dynasty, or the birth of an epoch!"

"It couldn't ever mean all that to me; but I must have something. Will you teach me your books, father?"

"Yes, Mary, yes. I have always desired to instruct my children. It is their choice that brings them to maturity unlearned. You are my own daughter, Mary"—he laid delicate, considering fingers

on the beautiful, well domed head; "if you can come to it with a willing mind, there is no doubt that you can enter and possess the beautiful world of books. We will begin in the morning with"—and he ran over a half-dozen of his classic favorites. This was a strong swimmer to guide a novice into the floods of knowledge.

"I—I don't think I could get through quite all that—not at once," faltered the girl.

"Maybe, maybe. Well, an eagle runs full forty yards to gain impetus for beginning his flight; so must the intellect thrust talons in the humble earth until its wings catch the air and feel the splendid power to rise."

"I will try to take interest, father, I promise; but we ought to go back now. They will be anxious over me. Oh, what grief I might have caused them! How could I have been so selfish?"

Hand in hand, they went home. At the open door Myrtle heard the old man saying to the sister her heart was so sore for:

"Yes, Mary Stuart's mother, Mary Lorraine, was one of a romantic line renowned during two centuries for genius and misfortunes. Of her immediate family——"

"Oh, father," said Myrtle, "don't worry her over such things—to-night!"

"But," said Mary, to the surprise of all, "he's not worrying me. I like it."

"She is going into the land of books," explained Alfred Scott, smiling. "There are many beautiful things in books and—sorrow."

VII.

So Mary fashioned a mask—a mask for the face of Mary Scott!—drew her short curls low on the forehead and far over the cheeks, so that she might sit in a darkened corner with her family. But it meant much to the Scotts that she mingled with them at all; and from Betsey to the twins it was a race as to who should bring the most brightness into the shadowed life of their Queen. She accompanied her father now in his long night walks, discussing with him the history and literature he had portioned out for that day. As she sewed with Myrtle, the girls studied together, asking each other questions, and taking turns in reading aloud.

"I will, I'm sure I will," she said when Myrtle opened the question of her going out in the day as well as at night; "but I can't just yet. I promised father to learn to face the world as I am, and I'll do it; I'll make myself walk right out in the sun."

A few days afterward she said with something of her old suddenness: "I'm going to do it now—right now. I'll dress up; I'll make

my apparel as brave as my heart—as my heart”—the voice faltered—“ought to be.”

Alas, the apparel in that poor little wardrobe revealed to Mary's questioning eyes even less of bravery than she found in her sad, stricken, dismayed young heart! She turned from its open door. “There isn't a thing but—this;” and, with a strange look, she produced from its box her carefully laundered wedding dress.

“Wasn't it done up beautifully?” said Myrtle, with hasty embarrassment. “Every one of the stains came out.”

“Yes,” murmured Mary; “it's only a white rag, yet it's forgotten the past—braced up and got all its starch back. I'll put it on.”

She did, and, pinning on her big, picturesque black hat, drew over all a thick gray veil and went, on an impulse, out into the street. For half a block she met no one. So sweet were the early spring scents and sounds, so welcome the sight of familiar landmarks seen in the afternoon light for the first time in so many months, that she wandered on past the church, diverted by her own new sensations. Suddenly she stopped short. *A handsome man in a light, doctor's buggy was driving slowly toward her. It was Eugene. Mary's lovely face had only been her crowning beauty. Her slim yet rounded body was all grace, whether it moved with pliant spring or fell into the adorable lines of repose; her hands were a dimpled child's; and her curls of bright gold—a child's too—not long enough to be confined, moved in the soft air, where the silvery veil fluttered aside to disclose them.

As she stood, one white hand on her breast, to hold this blowing veil, one foot half advanced, she looked a startled nymph.

Eugene had never for a moment really succeeded in forgetting the wild, victorious, subduing sweetness of their brief love. Now at sight of her it came over him in an irresistible flood.

“Mary!” he cried hoarsely.

“Yes,” she answered him in her old voice, so poignantly sweet and so familiar to his heart. “Yes, Eugene, it is Mary. Did I startle you?”

“Like a dream of the night come back at noonday.” He drew a quick breath and glanced vaguely about him. “It's been a long, long time since I—since I saw you. Are you——” He hesitated. “Are you well—and happy?”

“I am well.” She smiled a little beneath the silken mask and misty veil. “And I am thankful for many joys that I did not know existed when I was happy.”

He leaned nearer and spoke in a low voice: “I have thought of you, Mary; I have hoped to meet you. I have regretted that—

regretted the manner of our farewell. I was beside myself with grief and consternation. I hope you have remembered that. I want you to believe that I have always been, and shall always be, your—friend." The words should have been welcome, but the manner was disquieting to the girl's frank, honest nature. "You believe this, Mary?"

"Yes—oh, yes, Eugene."

"Your friend, your faithful friend, always—not happy, but a faithful friend to you." He looked earnestly at the shifting veil which hid Mary's scarred face. Time and circumstance slipped away from him. He knew the lion of old desire was once more rampant in his heart to tear and rend. With one pained glance into his working face, with no word of response, Mary turned and almost ran. Months of seclusion had left her helpless to cope with this situation. She did not stay her hurrying feet till she found herself at the open church door. It was where she had longed to come, and now she fled to the house of God as to sanctuary. Slipping into that humble pew which the Scotts sometimes filled to overflowing, she sank upon her knees, bent her head, and prayed:

"Oh, Thou who hast afflicted Thy child—dear Lord, don't send this on me—not this! I make trouble everywhere. The folks at home have to suffer so much for me. Don't let Eugene look at me like that—feel to me like that. It must be that I'm not an entirely good woman, or he couldn't. Oh, to think of it! Poor Eugene, that I've made so unhappy—poor Eugene, who nearly broke my heart! And now that he's"—she sobbed—"married, he can come and look at me like a lover—and call me Mary!"

Her forehead rested on the back of the pew in front of her. Tears flowed for a while, then ceased. Soothed by the peace and stillness of the sacred place, she knelt so for a long time; then, in a pitiful little voice, she added to her petition—very low, so that only God should hear: "Defend me, dear Lord, from remembering that Eugene would have been my husband now, and we would have been so—so happy, if—oh!—if in Thy Providence—— Defend me, dear Lord! I have so little. His love would have given me so much. Life is so hard for me now. Comfort me."

For hours she knelt alone in the silent church. The aisles grew shadowy; the full moon rose and poured its light through the stained windows. Jack had come inside the door once, calling her name softly, but she did not hear, and he went away, not seeing her kneeling form in the corner of the dusky pew. Now another voice at the church door penetrated her consciousness. She knew those smooth, careful accents and cadences. Eugene's wife was coming into the church, leading a number of friends.

"Of course Dr. Hilgard wants to see it, Eugene," said Mrs. Urmson, "and so does Mr. Macalester. I promised them while we were at dinner to show them Mrs. Dutton's memorial window by moonlight—Beatrice mentioned it first. Why do you never like to come into this church?"

"Oh, I'll come," answered Eugene's studiously careless voice. Mary crouched lower as they approached. She could not meet Eugene and his wife together, and now! Was this cruel torture the answer to her prayer?

"This way," said Nellie Urmson. "There is the window. Isn't that color scheme sublime! One can't look at great beauty for a length of time and keep quite sane. It's no marvel to me that the man who invented a color scale for music went mad."

"That clear, untroubled ultramarine against the pure deep red is good," said Eugene's deep voice. "And that mauve with its hint of fire is like inspired writing. One feels it is a revelation, without understanding why."

"Wasn't there a school for expression of sentiment in color?" asked a new voice that strangely affected the hidden listener.

"Yes, Dr. Hilgard, there was; but it was too exalted for human nature's daily food," responded Mrs. Urmson. "Oh, if it had lived, and I might have had one of my musical transpositions termed 'a study in greens' by the elect!"

"I say, you know," interposed Macalester, "do you and Urmson go on like this all the time?"

"Oh, no, indeed! I never see Dr. Urmson except at luncheon. We always try to have some one in then, so as not to bore each other too dreadfully. Do come some time for lunch, Mr. Macalester."

"Thank you very much—you're too flattering."

The two had walked apart, and stopped in the pew in front of Mary, who now saw Mrs. Urmson lay her hand on the man's arm. Eugene and Dr. Hilgard were occupied with a magnificent looking, rather silent young woman.

"Have you forgotten me, Champe? Do you never recall the old days?" asked Nellie Urmson.

Macalester patted lightly the hand on his shoulder. "You were very good to me once, Nellie; it would be presuming and impertinent for me to remember how good."

"Would it? Oh, you needn't look after Beatrice Iron-ton. She's Hilgard's property. I asked her down because Eugene told me that Dr. Hilgard was to be here for nearly a week, at the meeting of the State Medical. He's a prodigiously successful man; only thirty, and look what he's accomplished! They say he has a tre-

mendous income—especially since he came back from Germany the last time. You know he originated that wonderful operation they named for him—'the Hilgard.' Eugene calls him a daring innovator."

Professional jealousy of the man who excelled her husband as an earner and eclipsed him in the field of glory spoke in every word the young wife uttered. There was a little silence between the two, then Mrs. Urmson turned suddenly to her companion with, "Champe, come and see me. I ask from my heart, will you come?"

"Why, yes, certainly."

As the man and woman stood thus, Mary had a sudden glimpse of Eugene's face in the white moonlight. Was she right? Was it twisted with angry contempt? Did Eugene Urmson stand at the altar where he was wedded so few months ago, and look thus at his wife?

"He heard, and he despises her; but she doesn't seem to mind. She wasn't even in earnest with Mr. Macalester," thought Mary, with her quick instinct.

"I'm so much alone," pursued Mrs. Urmson, in her over-emotional voice, that tapered like her small fingers. "There is a loneliness of heart like that of the confined one in a crowded church, alone among all the music and the people and the flowers that are brought together to do her honor."

"Well," said Eugene's soft, smooth, sarcastic voice, "you change ballads into dirges. Come, I wouldn't drag a funeral into a flirtation."

"Flirtation? Why, how silly you are, Eugene!" returned his wife calmly.

Macalester only laughed uneasily, and muttered: "Nellie's always full of imagination."

"I'll have to plead guilty to that, Champe," she murmured, with a languishing glance. "Some one—some one who really appreciated and cared for me—once said that my music attracts around me the fancies of dead poets. Perhaps, being idly dead and tired of waiting for Judgment Day, poets do really dream of music like mine."

There was a significant silence after this flourish. Only the visitors, who did not fully understand the situation, were reasonably comfortable. Finally—

"Oh, well, let us be moving on," said Eugene drearily. "Hilgard and I are due a little later at the medical society."

"He leaves me every evening; it's a perfect mercy to have you with me, Miss Ironton," sighed Mrs. Urmson, with pretty plaintiveness; her composure had not once been ruffled. She looked dainty

and graceful, and Mary wondered at the indifference of the two men who had once loved her. Eugene's wife walked by herself down the aisle, casting sidelong glances over her shoulder to see who would join her. All three men lingered with the big, beautiful, silent young girl, passing out in a group. Again alone in the church, Mary attempted to rise; but she was stiff and cramped from long kneeling, and was yet in the pew when returning voices fell on her ear.

"Coming with me, Hilgard?" said Eugene, who had evidently just placed the ladies in their carriage.

"Not just now, Urmson. I've a little engagement with Macalester before the meeting. I'll see you there. Good by till then. Hold on, Mac; I must have left my book in the church."

"Easy found. It's as light as day in there; never saw so fine a moon," said Macalester's voice.

Mary heard them coming. If they were searching the pews, she could not hope to avoid discovery. It would be worse to be found crouching there than to meet them face to face.

"They will never note my difference from other people in the moonlight here," she told herself. Drawing her long veil closely around her, she came down the church aisle, her white figure shining, ghost-like, in the dusk.

Hilgard was ahead. At the instant he saw her, the light from a plain window struck full upon his unshadowed face; both men carried their hats in their hands in deference to the sacred edifice.

"Oh!" cried Mary, with a long, tremulous indrawing of the breath. "It's you—you!"

Then, as the young physician sprang forward to offer the assistance which she seemed to need, she added in a falling voice: "Excuse me, I thought I saw—— You look like some one that—— Oh, excuse me. Let me pass."

As she clung, half fainting, to the pew by which she had halted, Macalester came up behind the visitor.

"I am sorry I startled you, madam," said Dr. Hilgard. "Best loosen your veil, if you feel ill. It's rather warm this evening."

He moved toward her; and, as though she imagined he was about to put his suggestion into act, she drew back and half whispered, "I—I can't take it off. No, you didn't startle me—not in that way, but by a resemblance. It's no matter. I will go on now."

"Why, it's Mary Scott!" cried Macalester's voice, with almost reverent joy. "Miss Mary, I was just taking Dr. Hilgard around to your house. I'd made up my mind that you must see him—but most of all, that he must see you. He's only here for a few days. He's doing wonderful things for people—wonderful! Why, this is providential!"

Then Hilgard knew what the veil covered.

"You're so good to me—so heavenly kind—that it seems ungracious to say it; but, Mr. Macalester, since I gained strength to run, or turn a key in the door, no human being has looked on my uncovered face. I—I try to be sensible, but it seems to me that I just can't bear it. They did see me at first, you know; and it was so—awful!"

The tears were thick in Macalester's eyes.

"But you're going to let Dr. Hilgard look at your face—because he can cure you," the man who unselfishly loved Mary Scott urged. "You are," as he saw a motion of yielding. "Sit right down there. This is God's house, and the cure will be God's work. We won't give her time to change her mind, Hilgard. Here's a box of vestas. You make such examination as you can, and I'll watch at the door, that you shan't be interrupted."

Mary, clutching her small hands together in agony, braced her nerves for the anticipated shock when she should see curiosity and horror in the eyes bent upon her unveiled face. She watched Macalester go with a sort of despair; the humiliation seemed so useless. She was being shamed for nothing. Had not all those tall, black-coated men gathered around her bed of torture, and—after staring—staring—staring—one after another pronounced her case hopeless? Was not that enough?

With a skilled hand, Hilgard, who was happy in dealing with nervous or timid patients, removed the stifling veil and dainty mask. Then he struck a vesta, and looked with frowning intentness at the face of the poor Queen, that was seamed and marred out of all human comeliness.

Mary had closed her eyes. "Permit me," and his deft fingers gently pressed upon the scarred flesh. "Is the soreness gone? Oh, I see—but not the tenderness, the sensitiveness. It tingles and stings sometimes, does it not? Your general health is good? You look well."

With shut eyes, Mary pondered that blunt concluding phrase, while Hilgard lit another vesta and continued his examination. She looked well! What manner of man was this that could confront the face she had seen answer for hers in the glass and tell her that she looked well? Suddenly there swept back over her memory the glimpse she had had of this man as he crossed the strip of moonlight coming toward her. She opened her eyes instantly.

In the light of the wax match, alive, breathing, looking at her, was the face which had twice been visioned to her in time of direst need—the face that had saved her first from madness, and afterward from a suicide's grave.

The sight so overcame her that she settled back in her seat with a little sigh. Hilgard thought she had fainted, and called to Macalester.

"No," she said, putting a cold, trembling little hand upon his arm; "you can go on now."

"I'm quite through—with what little can be done here. But I'm afraid I hurt you. Perhaps I was rough. I wanted to see just how deep that sensitiveness went."

"It wasn't that," said Mary gently, while he took the mask and veil from her trembling fingers and deftly replaced them. "You look so much like—you resemble——"

"Somebody whom you know?" supplied the doctor cheerily, when she seemed unable to proceed. "I hope it was some one in whom you had great faith; for if you are to be my patient—and I hope and believe that you are—you'll have to trust me through some pretty tough times."

"I could trust you—I can trust you," said Mary, rising and facing him—"to the death—and 'out into the dream beyond.'"

The quotation was fruit of that reading which had become a solace to the girl. Dr. Hilgard took the situation lightly; he was used to extravagant praise from neurotic women patients. Yet, as he touched her hand and found it still cold and trembling, her emotion reached him. But when he would have spoken, Macalester interrupted from the door.

"Here's Miss Mary's brother looking for her," he said.

"All right, she's ready," said Hilgard, and gently guided her out of the church.

"Well," cried Jack, "have you been here all the time? You scared us all pretty near to death. Father said I'd find you in the church. I came once and didn't find you; and he sent me back again. He said you and he came here nights to pray. Gee! You've sure had us praying this evening, all right!"

"I'm sorry," said Mary gently. "I'll go home at once now. I must have been in the church three or four hours. Good evening, gentlemen. Thank you both very much for your kindness and interest."

VIII.

THE following day Dr. Hilgard had five interviews with five persons who concerned themselves about the possible cure of Mary Scott. First came Macalester, adding to the information he had already given the young physician some details concerning her broken engagement to Dr. Urmson.

"The family is poor," he said. "The girl herself used to sew

for a living. The father may earn something, but I fancy they depend almost entirely on some young boys who are growing up. If this treatment is going to be expensive, Miss Mary has friends who would be glad—— Well, hang it all! I never was any good at diplomacy—if you can manage to do anything for the girl, and let me foot all or part of the bills, without their knowing of it, I'd be most happy."

Hilgard looked into the strong, ugly face of the man who was estimated by his fellows a mere dilettante. "You're a good soul, Macalester," he said warmly; "and, if I can, I'll let you be generous here."

The visitor drove to the morning meeting of the State Medical with Urmson; and the subject of Mary Scott's cure was brought up between the two physicians almost immediately.

"Macalester's been telling me that you claim you can cure Mary Scott," her old lover broke out abruptly.

Hilgard forgave the uncourteous speech, for the very evident distress of the speaker.

"I beg your pardon, Urmson," he replied. "Should I have consulted you before making an examination? Are you Miss Scott's attendant physician? Have you examined the case lately?"

"The case!" echoed Urmson irritably. "To me Mary Scott is not a 'case.' No, I am not her physician. I saw her face but once, nearly a year ago. I didn't know you had gone so far as to make an examination."

"I could hardly call it that," Hilgard amended, striving to lighten the situation. "I found her in the church last night, when Macalester and I went back for my book. He was taking me up to the house on the hope that she'd let me have a look at her trouble—that was the engagement I mentioned to you. From what I saw then, I consider the case hopeful, if the girl has stamina enough for the treatment I propose."

"Macalester! Curse him! he'd marry her to-morrow if she'd have him. He'd like nothing better than playing Samaritan, getting her cured and winning her gratitude. Let the case alone, Bob. It's hopeless. Take my word for that, and drop the matter."

"It is not a question of who would marry Mary Scott," observed Dr. Hilgard coldly. "The point is, to find somebody who can cure her; and that I am willing to attempt."

"I was afraid of this," muttered the other, picking up his whip and giving the horse an unneeded cut. "You'll excite false hopes in the poor girl. She's had plenty to bear without that. The best medical talent we could get at the time was called in consultation."

"A year ago—a year ago," put in Hilgard. "Many things

have come about since then, Gene. Plenty of new ideas—discoveries—inventions. Our profession is not infallible. Nobody knows that better than a doctor. Patients that we have said to be dying live to laugh at us; our convalescents die while we are congratulating them. Besides, conditions change; and with the plan I have in mind, I have great hopes of Miss Scott now."

Eugene Urmson's brow flamed scarlet. "Let her alone!" he exclaimed roughly. "She shall not be tortured. I won't have it. And no other man shall cure her."

He caught himself back midway his speech. He had not meant to say so much. Hilgard's brow raised at the mad utterance; but he passed it over, as an old friend's offense, one which would scarce bear discussion, and only said:

"Every moment is a torture to her as she is now."

"Why should it be? You say yourself that her general health is good. What does a woman want with beauty, except to play the devil with it? Hilgard, as a personal favor to me, let this girl alone."

The visitor's quiet tones cut across Urmson's haste and insistence. "I don't believe you intended to say quite that, Gene. You're excited. Anyhow, the matter is out of my hands now. I have an appointment with Miss Scott this afternoon, and she will decide what neither you nor I have any right to bargain about."

Urmson turned his head with a sort of groan. "No right!" he echoed. "God knows I loved that girl, Hilgard. Think over what I've said to you. It would be a terrible thing to attempt her cure and fail. When you make your examination this afternoon you—you could tell her there's no hope, and give up the case—for my sake."

"Physicians all over the world are attempting cases and failing with them, every hour in the twenty-four," said Hilgard dryly. "I don't quite see why it should be more terrible for me to attempt Miss Scott's case and fail with it, than any of the dozen or so you and I have honestly done our best with in the past month, and found beyond our skill. Take care that you don't mean that it would be terrible if I cured the girl, Urmson. I'd hate to think you meant that."

Urmson gave him one raging look and devoted his attention entirely to the horse he drove, much to the animal's discomfort. Hilgard glanced at him covertly, thinking how strong the charm of a woman who could move to such monstrous meanness as he read in Urmson's attitude. He shrugged his shoulders a bit at the situation. Beautiful women and grand passions were not subjects which easily engrossed him, and he turned with interest to Dr. Bright, who met them at the curb.

During a pause in the proceedings, Dr. Bright drew Hilgard aside and spoke to him of Mary.

"That thing has haunted me like a sin," the elder man said.

2 "I'll be frank with you, Hilgard; I haven't a rag of faith in this treatment you propose. I consider the case hopeless; yet I'm glad you're taking it up. God knows—maybe you'll make a success of it; and I never had a patient who appealed so powerfully to my mere human sympathy as that poor girl did."

"I supposed your verdict would be the same as Urmson's," the new physician commented. He did not repeat Urmson's other remarks.

"Eugene behaved like a sneak and cad in that matter," burst out Eugene's partner; "and yet I pitied him almost as much as I did the girl. It was a madly unsuitable match. No, no"—as Hilgard made to interrupt; "I don't base my objections on the fact that she was a sewing girl, and he had money and family. Gene was crazy about her—yet he never really loved her. Lord forgive me for saying so—the boy'd swear I was mad; he vowed he adored—worshipped her; but it always seemed to me that he was like the man who couldn't see the town for the houses. I give you my word, Hilgard, I honestly believe that he could never have any real affection for Mary Scott, because he was so passionately infatuated by her beauty."

Dr. Hilgard nodded. "I see what you mean," he said. "Eugene was always a beauty worshipper. I'm glad you take so ingenuously lenient a view of his conduct. No doubt you are right. A man of his stamp should marry a good, plain woman. I can fancy, from what I hear of this girl, that his infatuation ran to absurd heights."

"It did," assented Bright. "Now, there was Macalester, who was just as much enamored, and the present condition of affairs doesn't scare him off either. Mac was the man for her, from the first. Yes, and if it had been Mac she'd be a well woman to-day. From Gene's own telling of it, about half the mad things she did up the river that day, that were the cause of this strange disorder, were to shock the swell society set he took her amongst—poor, crude, spunky child!—and failed to defend her from; and the rest of it was drawn from her by the sight of his weak irritation and dismay. Champe Macalester's a man that doesn't concern himself one whit what other people think of him or his. He'd just enjoy ramming such capers as that poor child's down society's throat, and laugh to see 'em squirm."

Later in the day a shabby, sloping shouldered old man, with a blue book dangling from hands clasped at his back, came to Hilgard's hotel, and waited patiently till he was allowed to

come up. Alone with the celebrated young physician, the old man said:

"My name is Scott. It was my daughter who encountered you yesterday evening while at her orisons in church."

"Yes; I met Miss Scott last night, and was much interested in her case."

"You can assure me that benefit is possible?"

"My examination was superficial, but, yes, it is possible. There is a new treatment for such cases; very painful, pretty lengthy, but it's being remarkably successful."

"Will you come to my residence and enter into detailed arrangements? This is a very serious matter with us, in more ways than one. To embark upon any new expenditure is an event in poverty equal to the preparation of rich nations for battle."

"I am at your service any hour after five."

And the disarray of the old scholar's mind may be judged from the fact that Alfred Scott tore the fly leaf from his Virgil to write his address for the man who might help the Queen.

Late that evening, as Hilgard was leaving the hotel, a very blue-eyed, freckled boy, with remarkably long legs that seemed barer than those of other street urchins, intercepted him.

"Coming?" demanded the boy abruptly.

"Beg pardon; did you speak to me?"

"Coming?" repeated Jack. "Mary's waiting. I saw her at the window. She keeps looking out and dodging back."

"Oh, I remember you now—you're Miss Scott's brother, Jack."

"Yep."

"I'm on my way to your house now."

"Well, hurry; didn't I tell you Mary was waiting?"

"You seem much interested in your sister," observed Hilgard good-naturedly.

"Interested in the Queen? Well, I guess. They don't make 'em like her any more. She—she was——"

The boy picked up his foot, "Got a stone bruise," he explained; "always make my eyes water."

"Good for you, Jack," said Hilgard warmly. "You stick to your sister."

"You bet I will. I'm goin' to your hospital," came the next verbal bomb-shell.

"What is the trouble?" asked the physician, with a kindly smile.

"No trouble. I'm just goin'."

"As a—visitor?" hazarded the doctor.

"Nope. I ain't got no time to fool around visitin' folks. I'm coming to stay."

"To stay?" in a perplexed tone.

"To work it out, you know—the money for curing Mary. The other boys in our family don't take money matters to heart. Each one of 'em has got him a girl, and girls is expensive. Catch me gettin' sweet on candy suckers! Father's a Latin scholar, and he's above it. The family hangs on me."

The westering sun burnished the boy's ruddy hair, the blue of his eyes seemed to widen and spread with excitement, like the sky reflected in a wind-swept pond. His want of training, almost of civilization—he was at the age to despise such veneer to the natural savage—did not repel Hilgard. As the wind-blown pond might hold the face of the sky—a muddy little pond—so the boy's eyes seemed to him to reflect a heavenly spirit.

"Does your father know what you intend?"

The boy shook his head. He caught a fortuitous fly as it passed him, held it prisoner for a moment, and then released it. "There's too many boys at our house for anybody to care much what becomes of one of 'em, I reckon," he said. "I'll tell ma before I go. She counts us all now and then, and keeps track of how many there are about."

Hilgard was still preparing some civil speech which should decline the proffered services, when they reached the Scott cottage in Memory Lane. Jack, who honestly wondered why intelligent people wasted time on courtesies and formalities, considered the matter settled.

It was not until the physician was making his final and thorough examination, that the contract was actually closed. Mary, whose eager gaze searched his countenance in the strong daylight, to assure herself that it was one with the visioned face in line and feature, found his skilled fingers trembling at their task.

"Would you mind closing your eyes?" he asked in a low voice, for the pathos of those wonderful blue orbs unsettled his nerves. And on the instant he decided in Jack's favor, because—oh, vulnerable heart of man!—the boy had blue eyes like his sister!

IX.

For nearly three months the discrowned Queen of the Scotts had lived in darkness—not figurative shadow, but actual, physical blackness, which no ray of light was permitted to pierce. After a series of operations so painful, endured under a regimen so rigorous, that even Hilgard's professional courage almost failed him sometimes, Mary was placed in this lightless room, and no fresh-blown air reached her except when her blind nurse led her out upon moonless nights.

The old Mary of audacious speech and ready laugh could never have borne it. The woman whose mind was now fairly alive within her, whose heart and soul had looked into abysses so much more dreadful that this might, in comparison, have been refuge—even this woman faltered.

Ah, Mary—Mary of Memory Lane! Still Queen of the Scotts, but no longer regnant queen of love and beauty! When your great namesake was sent, discrowned, into bondage, she bribed her captors with the wealth that Elizabeth could not take from her—the wealth of her feminine charm. But you, poor Queen whose subjects are prisoners of poverty and may not help you, with what will you bribe those who steal your liberty? With what will you buy amelioration of your darkened lot? How purchase companionship for your lonely hours? If a beautiful face were all, Mary Scott would indeed have been helpless. But young Dr. Hilgard, who had never seen her except in her disfigured condition, brought himself up with a round turn more than once, questioning why the way to that darkened chamber spread so easily before his feet. He told himself that it was the girl's magnificent courage in the face of an ordeal which would have daunted many strong men; that it was his deep interest in this novel and almost experimental plan of cure. Yet he knew that neither of these would account for the feeling of kinship with which he took—and retained—his new patient's hand.

Talking is easy in the dark. Failing to see the hampering body which makes so many demands and exactions in all human relations, we begin to feel that we have doffed the flesh and are souls communing face to face.

Perhaps Robert Hilgard learned more of the real Mary Scott in those three months than would have been possible in any three years of ordinary life. A blind nurse had been secured for the novel experiment, so that she might read to the patient from the various raised letter or braille books, and more successfully attend her in the pitchy blackness necessary. This girl knew the step of each comer; but Mary soon learned to recognize that of Hilgard.

He would come walking rapidly and humming a little under his breath, as Pygmalion might while he hewed Galatea from the marble. Before he stopped to tap at the heavily curtained door, Mary would be on her feet and half way to meet him.

At first Jack was allowed to spend some time in the prison of gloom with his sister, though Hilgard had to quiet the fears of both that he could not thus earn a wage. It was Mary who first discovered that the eerie confinement was telling terribly on the nerves of the growing boy. She appealed to the doctor, who reluctantly made it part of the treatment to eliminate Jack—like most physicians,

he would ruthlessly have sacrificed those in health for the sake of his patient.

Alfred Scott's family had proven so unexpectedly generous that the less afflicted sister benefited by the overflow. But Myrtle, although under treatment in the same hospital, could not be allowed to spend much time with Mary, lest her own cure be retarded. Dr. Hilgard had undertaken the righting of that faulty ankle—he laughed at the suggestion of a scrofulous taint in the Scott blood, and looked for a speedy recovery in which open air and careful diet played a part. So Myrtle's visits were only twice a week, and must be brief.

Yet it was necessary to the best results that Mary should be kept in a state of mind as nearly cheerful and normal as possible under the very abnormal conditions; so Dr. Hilgard spent in the close curtained room every moment that he could spare.

"You dare not get morbid," he said to her. "It's the one thing I dread; and the only reason I could attempt this cure with you was that—though so truly feminine—I believed you lacked certain feminine weaknesses."

Three months in pitchy blackness is an eternity. The blind nurse was a timid, rather melancholy girl, and Hilgard attempted to supply cheer and mental ozone to the darkened chamber. He, the reticent, the chary of speech, was forced into talking about himself, telling stories of his boyhood, his young manhood, and his years of study abroad.

Then he strove to coax her into speech, preferring always the rôle of listener. And how well the girl did talk! Her old charm was with her, and the months of suffering and humiliation when she had been ground to powder by the wheels of a cruel necessity, the later days of study, and contact with her father's ripe, stored mind, showed in the conversation of this one-time hoiden sewing girl.

Hilgard grew fond of the girl, as we do of those whom we benefit. "I wish I had more time to scold you," he said tenderly. "I always think a cure is accomplished by a very few drugs, a small amount of treatment, and a great deal of scolding." He laughed genially. "I want to fully impress upon you that you can help me and yourself. Believe utterly in good—in joy—as you used to when you were out in the sunlight. Sorrow has been advertised by the old poets like a patent medicine, till people take it for their ills; but there is no evil, humanly speaking, till there is sorrow. Sitting here alone, you must try to keep Miss Bain busy reading or talking to you—quarrel with her if you can't do better. Think of the dearest and best thing in the world, if you must think at all."

"I will," returned Mary promptly. Then there was a suspicion of laughter in her voice, and she smiled to herself in the dark as she added impulsively: "I almost always think of you."

Dr. Hilgard laughed out wholesomely at the excellent compliment he had prepared for himself. "It's commonly so with physician and patient," he said cheerily. But he did not add that it was uncommon for him at least to be so followed and filled by thought of any patient as he was with the idea of this girl.

It was midnight of the same day that, responding to a message that Miss Scott was hysterical and could not be quieted, he found her sobbing convulsively and on the verge of nervous collapse, because she tried to choke back the sobs.

"Don't do that," he said gently, seating himself by her side, and taking the little cold wrist to note the pulse. "Weep if you feel like it, and then tell me, if you can, exactly what the matter is."

As he had hoped, Mary mastered herself instantly. She lay a long time silent, soothed by his mere presence, the touch of his hand; then, "I want a light," she said pitifully. "I'm so ashamed, after all you've done, to break down this way. But you told me to try to explain, and"—she came back to the little form like a child—"I want a light."

Hilgard pressed her hand reassuringly. "Tell me just how you feel. Say it," he counselled. "You will be helped by putting it into words."

Thus encouraged, Mary faltered: "Oh, the dreadful longing first rose up and drowned me—the awful longing to have only one little candle—or a peep at one star. Oh!"—a sob broke through her voice—"are you sure the sun hasn't gone out! I've been—been asking Miss Bain if it wasn't possible I'd lost my sight. I knew of a little girl—she lived next door to us, and I played with her when we were children—she had scarlet fever and went blind, and no one could bear to tell her. I used to cry about it because she was always asking: 'Isn't it morning yet?' You wouldn't deceive me that way?"

Poor Mary! With what a strange, vivid power she contrived to make the child's piteous cry, "Isn't it morning yet?" her own. The man beside her was deeply thrilled.

"To the best of my knowledge and belief," he said, with resolute cheer, "your eyes are much better than mine. It was something worse than that which set you shivering and weeping this way."

"Oh, I imagine terrible things in this long darkness," returned Mary evasively. "Sometimes I think it's the end of the world."

"And don't you have any pleasing visions that paint themselves in the dark? You ought to have. You must treat your mind like

a magic lantern—pull out these horror slides, and slip in something good and comforting.”

There was silence in the dark room for a moment; then Mary said suddenly:

“Dr. Hilgard, I told you about the breaking of my engagement to Eugene. I said that something saved me from outright madness when he—when he turned his back upon me—left me there alone. But I didn’t tell you what that something was. It was your face.”

She felt a sudden movement of the fingers which held hers. “You spoke to me about the big, heart-shaped locket I wear, and I told you that Eugene had given it to me and asked me never to take it off till he unclasped the chain. It isn’t a locket. It’s a sort of amulet. The old man who sold it to Gene called it a psychic camera. I had my hand on it—that’s the way the old man said you must do to make it show you visions, but I wasn’t thinking of that—and cried to God in that awful hour when Eugene showed me—told me—showed me how he felt—that I was repulsive to him—to show me some way out of my misery. He showed me—your face.”

“You had a vision of a face which seems now to you to resemble mine,” supplied Hilgard gently. He never argued with his patients.

“Oh, no; it was you. I saw your face once after that. It was the night Eugene was married. I stood outside in the street and saw him go in. Something he said about—about his wife—seemed to loosen a bearing in my brain. Dr. Hilgard, I ran as straight to the river as a child to its mother’s arms. The first thing I really remember was standing on a raft, right at the edge of the water, crouched to leap, and seeing your face in the moonlight. I had the amulet in my hand.”

“I should not have thought you a subject liable to hallucination, though you are a sensitive.”

“That’s what the amulet man called me—a sensitive. That’s why he was willing I should have one of his cameras. That’s why he was sure it would bring me visions, if I were strongly enough moved when I asked for them. Well, to-night it seemed to me that I was about at the end of my own resources, and I put my hand on my locket and begged to see your face again—but it didn’t come. So I cried, and let them send for you.”

“Oh, yes, it did—promptly and willingly,” said the doctor, with quiet practicality. “That sort of vision is a manifestation of self hypnotism. The subjective mind always works by the line of least resistance. It wouldn’t trouble to give you a vision of me when I, in the flesh, was to be had for the asking. I hope my face behaves well when it goes about visiting young ladies. Did you notice if it was properly shaved and washed?”

"Now you are making a joke of something which is very serious to me," protested Mary. "But at least I'm glad you don't scold."

"You're better now, aren't you? Almost well enough to go to sleep, like a sensible child. What was it set you to inviting me in in that ghostly fashion?"

"Bad dreams," returned Mary, half ashamed.

"Tell them," suggested the doctor. "They'll sound so silly that their power will be broken. You should have repeated them to Miss Bain. It's an excellent plan."

"She wouldn't have understood," objected Mary. "There would have been so much to explain to her—but I did tell her what I could, and she was very good to me."

"I have had dreams myself sometimes," chimed in the plaintive voice of the blind nurse, "and I could sympathize with you."

"It was a sort of waking dream," said Mary. "I'm quite sure I was wide awake, for I saw the darkness in this room—I opened my eyes in it as I do all day long—and I saw her!"

Hilgard slipped finger ends down against her pulse.

"Her?" he repeated.

"Nellie Arthur," Mary explained; "Eugene's wife. She stood right here by my bed, looking at me with awful eyes. I could see her in all the darkness. There was a child in her arms, and I don't know why it should have frightened me and seemed so horrible—horrible—horrible! I felt as though I could not breathe nor live if I couldn't have a light. Dr. Hilgard, what shall I do if this vision comes back to me here in the awful darkness, and your face will not appear when I press on my locket and beg to see it?"

Hilgard believed that he had a case of mild hysteria to deal with. "Do just as you did this time," he said, with hearty cheer, rising to go. "Send for me. My patients always feel free to do that when the pinch comes and the strain is more than they can bear alone. That's a curious thing about the locket, Miss Scott—but I don't see that it can do any harm."

"I knew you instantly when I saw you in the church, because of it," said Mary.

"Perhaps," agreed Hilgard. "But, you know, my picture was in a good many publications at the time I returned from Vienna and reopened the sanitarium here. All your local papers had it in during that medical meeting in your own town. It might have been one of the forgotten facts that crop up to convince us of a previous existence."

It was impossible for Dr. Hilgard not to feel a new interest in his patient after the confidences of that night. She had seen his face in visions, she had set him a little above humanity, had reached out

to him in darkness and trouble as a child seeks its mother. In the soul of a woman who has swayed the sceptre of beauty, there is a something which yet clings about her in its loss; witness the charm of old, old women who have been richly dowered with physical loveliness in their youth. Mary Scott had the heart of a queen, as well as the name of one; and that high heart had for her young physician a charm noble and pathetic. The girl's nature, restless, emotional, a mighty engine of energy and power, fought harder than that of another against forced inaction. Myrtle was dismissed home, cured; Jack was sent to the down-town office, where his services were becoming valuable; the blind nurse, a delicate creature, became ill and was under treatment in another part of the sanitarium; and through the last and hardest month Mary fought single-handed, with one nurse and another (since none could stand the darkness long) and the devoted encouragement of her physician.

But one day the last hour of the millennium shall drop a golden sun behind the vine-wreathed hills of a dying earth on which to-day so many lips are murmuring: "Will the to-morrow ever come?" And the six months of treatment at length were over. Gradually the gloom of Mary's darkened chamber was mitigated. One morning, in a dim gray twilight, Dr. Hilgard looked on her face.

There was no beauty there—and no horror. Cloth-white, the smooth skin clung to temple and cheek bone; no color accented the lips; hollow blue circles ringed lustreless eyes; the soft hair was concealed in a close white cap, lest a wandering tendril inflame the still tender flesh. This was no glowing girl, to turn a man's head, but only a tremulous invalid, ready to weep at a word, appealing to the physician, not to the man. Yet it was plain to any who could have looked on Hilgard's face at that moment that not only his pride in his professional success, but a deep joy and tenderness for his patient, crowned the supreme moment.

"You can't bear the direct rays of the sun for a week yet," he said, hanging over her, viewing her face from one point and another, touching it gently with the lotion he had been applying. "I shouldn't like you to even have too much refracted light on it for a day or so, but I'm arranging for you to go into the next room. It will be a sweet, blessed change and relief for you. We have a new portrait of Beatrice Ironton in there; it came from Florence yesterday. You remember Miss Ironton was in the church with me the night I first met you. I want you to look at this picture of her, and promise me to grow as rosy and healthy looking as it is, that you may do credit to my skill."

Mary did remember Miss Ironton's presence in the church, and suddenly there came back to her with a rush Nellie Urmson's words

concerning the girl. So this was the woman her deliverer was to marry. She was generous enough to hope with all her heart that his bride was worthy of him; but she was woman enough to doubt it!

Supported by his arm, with the nurse at hand to assist, she tottered across the adjoining room, where more and more light was admitted, till she could see the pictured face looking down at her with a calm, inscrutable gaze. Mary saw Hilgard's gaze pass from her own blanched countenance to the rosy one above her. Her eyes brimmed with tears.

"What!" cried her kind physician. "Baptizing this first day of release in brine?"

"I must look so—the contrast——" faltered poor Mary.

"There's not a blemish on your cheeks," exclaimed the young physician exultantly, "if you do resemble a celery sprout! You must grow your own roses"—with gay challenge—"I don't furnish them. You'll find they'll come fast enough with light and joy."

"You've done enough for me without furnishing roses," said the girl in a deep, moved voice. "You've done more than give me a smooth skin—I think you've taken many a blemish off my soul. I thank God for making such a man as you, Dr. Hilgard."

"Would you mind making a note of all that for the benefit of some of my *confrères*? It might open their eyes a bit. They have never, so far, addressed me in just such a fashion."

Mary looked at him with the blue eyes which had had power to trouble his pulses even when they gazed from a disfigured face—and the laugh died on his lips. He realized that he had set in motion that which might influence his own life, when he gave back to this girl her diadem of beauty.

During the days that elapsed before her departure, Pygmalion saw his Galatea as often as possible. She continued to seem more like a suggestion than a decided human being. With the admission of light, their conversation had swung back from the intimately personal basis upon which it had rested for months. She was no longer dependent upon him. A celebrated case, a personality which won the love of every nurse in the great hospital, there was always some one—or more—hanging about her, and dividing her attention.

Then came a day when she met him with the request to be allowed to go home a little earlier than had been planned, since there was a letter from Myrtle, containing domestic news of importance which seemed to call for her presence. Hilgard agreed reluctantly. She was gaining strength with great rapidity, and her pallor was merely a matter of bleaching, which sunlight would remove. He put her in the carriage himself (Jack was to meet her at the station), and

laid a bunch of exquisite pink roses in her lap. The porch was full of nurses and attendants, waving good by to the departing guest. Hilgard leaned forward and said in a low voice:

"Farewell, my brave, good, faithful patient. Let me know if my head comes visiting you again. My heart is sure to do so—but you won't know of that."

It was a sentimental speech for Hilgard. The girl's lip trembled. Her fingers clung to his. "Thank you—thank you—thank you," she whispered. "I seem to be always saying that to you. I'm afraid my amulet will never bring me another vision of your face, because you yourself have made it so that I shall not pray for the vision in such deep distress."

Mary's curls were loosened now about the waxen brow, and, though she looked startlingly pallid, she would scarcely attract undue attention. Yet, at the last moment, she leaned forward and put out her hands to Hilgard. "I wish you were coming, too!" she cried childishly. "I'm afraid. And I've been remembering all morning how unreasonable I was sometimes—how foolish. It grieves me to think of sending for you in the night as I did. Forgive me. You will forgive me after I'm gone. I—you were so good."

Hilgard watched the carriage that bore her away. Then he turned with a little sigh and went into the room where the portrait of Beatrice Ironton hung.

"We want this in the big entrance hall," he said to the head janitor, whom he summoned for the purpose. "Miss Ironton will be brought here a bride next month, and I want her portrait in place; the bust and picture of her father should be directly opposite it, there on the east wall."

X.

"THREE yards and a half," read Betsey Scott from the family account book, "at seven cents a yard. Seven times three are twenty-one, seven halves make three—um-m-m—twenty-four cents and a half. Doctor for twins, one dollar and a half. What does happen to the money? There's so many of us, and we all earn something; but there's never quite enough for the dry-goods bill. Talk about needles and pins—where do the nickels and quarters go? Sometimes I think it's shoes; we take two apiece, and there's holes in the soles; and then there's rubbers. So many feet take a deal of leather."

Alfred Scott, trying to write by a table in the front room, moved nervously. Mrs. Scott, stemming a rush of life fluid from the nostril of a twin, remarked in a casual way:

"Some one has knocked twice at the front door. I wish you'd see who it is, Alfred."

Seizing his blue book like a weapon, the old scholar investigatively opened the door, revealing a tall young man known to fame, though not to fortune, as the Rev. Wilbeforce Dundee. "Pleasant evening," remarked the young pastor. "All well, I hope. Thought I'd call around. How are you all?"

"The twins haven't been extra," said Mrs. Scott, elbowing aside her silent husband. "I know in my soul Eph is threatened with measles right now. They never take anything together and have it over with, like some folks's twins; they piece every disease out. One just gets well and ready to catch something else when the other comes down with his leavings."

"That must be very trying on you," allowed the young man. "Pleasant evening."

"Delightful," said Betsey, surreptitiously redding up the room and twitching the paper from before her unconscious father, who sat, Virgil open on his knee, meditatively regarding the young man.

"I suppose," he ventured presently, "that you remember your classics?"

"Yes. I may say, yes, sir. All well, I hope."

"You are, doubtless, familiar with the English translators. May I ask your favorite among those of Virgil? Dryden, Connington——"

"Dryden, sir, Dryden. Pleasant evening."

"It must be a lasting regret to the thoughtful that Virgil died before he could revise the *Æneid*. Dryden lived in a day when men had settled on no rule for spelling. How could a citizen of Babel translate a masterpiece from the most polished literature the world has ever known?"

"No offense, sir, I hope," said the Rev. Wilbeforce. "I just thought I'd call around. All well, I hope. Pleasant evening."

Alfred Scott adjusted his glasses, and took up the volume he loved, musing to himself, "He needs ripening, that young man."

"Did any one ever see the like? He might at least talk until I could make the place decent," commented the irate Betsey, slipping into the next room with a child's shoe, a tooth-brush, a towel, and her father's manuscript notes.

"Three cheers and kisses all around! Good folks, here I am!"

The front door had burst open, and a young girl ran into the room, flung her travelling satchel on the floor, leaped on a chair, snatched up her gray skirt, extended her dainty ankle, and shouted hysterically:

"Look there! Good as new!"

Betsey rushed out to greet the exclamer, who was already

surrounded by other members of the family. The young minister took refuge behind the curtain, evidently feeling that the recent performance pointed curtainward for a youth of rectitude. Myrtle, after kissing the family, came upon the head and shoulders of the unknown quantity behind the draperies, and dived for it with the cry:

"Come out here, Paris! You old darling! Oh, I'm so happy!"

No special providence intervening, and the family being too weak with consternation to interfere, out into the light, with his eyeglasses flying, Myrtle dragged the young man who had "called round," the while most energetically hugging and kissing her scuffling antagonist.

"Merciful heavens!" screamed Betsey, tearing them apart. "Are you crazy, Myrtle Scott? Have you lost your head because you've got a new ankle? Mr. Dundee, you ought to be ashamed!"

"What have I done?" stammered the victim. "I—I—I couldn't help it, really. I—I just called around. I——"

"You didn't scream," said Betsey severely. "And you a preacher! You let her do it, and never opened your mouth. I'll—well, you ought to be reported."

"No, no"—Myrtle revived sufficiently to succor the man whose embarrassment so much exceeded her own. "It was all my fault, Betsey. He pulled back awful hard—honest he did. I thought sure it was Paris. You said in your last letter that brother was at home. Don't you forgive me, Mr. Dundee?"

"There's nothing to forgive—I——" He coughed. "It is a pleasant evening. I just called round. Are you all well?"

"Well, sound, and whole," said Myrtle, too happy to permit her recent inadvertence to shadow such a home-coming. "I don't limp a bit, and oh, folks, folks, folks!—Mary is almost cured! She doesn't have to wear a mask now. They say there won't be a scar on her face!"

There was a dramatic silence in the little house in Memory Lane. It was broken by the Rev. Wilbeforce, who said more emphatically than usual:

"It is a pleasant evening."

"It's glorious!" agreed Myrtle. "I didn't write, so I could surprise you, and it was a jolly surprise, wasn't it? Where are the boys, mother?"

"They'll be along presently. They've all gone out. Let that lamp alone, Eph. It'll explode if you shake it so."

Myrtle's home-coming filled the little Scott house with sunshine. The Rev. Wilbeforce, who had probably never been saluted by a

young lady so enthusiastically before, began to call around with unaccustomed frequency.

"He's getting to be a real friend of the family," said Betsey, one night, several weeks after Myrtle's return. "I wonder if his private feelings would make any difference in his professional fees."

"Why, what a strange question!" said Myrtle, trembling slightly.

"It might, you know; and then, again, it mightn't. Some preachers expect more for being a friend of the family. I wish you'd ask him what he'd take to marry one of us."

"To marry one of us—oh, Betsey!"

"'Oh Betsey' nothing! I'm going to marry the corner notion store. He's got five thousand dollars' worth of stock, and doesn't owe a penny. Still, we're not made of money, and I'd like to get the preacher as cheap as possible."

"What can you mean? Who won't be made of money? What's a notion store to do with Mr. Wilbefore, or—or his marrying one of us?"

"The notion store is Mr. Nubbs, of course. I went over the books with him to-day. He's doing well. I've decided to take him."

"Why, Betsey Scott!" gasped Myrtle, leaning back and regarding her sister with amazement. "I didn't know you knew him in a personal way. Has he—have you—did you ever talk with him before he asked you?"

"Haven't I bought dry-goods for this family pretty nearly all my life? Why should I trade with a man forever and not notice he had a good business? Oh, yes, I've talked with him. Rainy evenings he'd have peanuts, or a watermelon, according to the season, and I'd sit in his office and go over our bills with him. We always had enough to keep us busy in that way. At first I thought he might trust freer if I was a little pleasant; and then I noticed he had a good business. Last Sunday such a quantity of jet came off my dress right in front of his store—he had it open, I guess he was watching for me—that I took it in to leave with him—no, goose, not the dress—the jet. We couldn't add up accounts on Sunday—that would have been a sin; and we didn't have much else to talk about; and so, to be entertaining, I suppose, he asked me to marry him."

"You know better, Sis. That's just your ridiculous way. You won't admit that you care a lot about him, and he about you. Isn't happiness surprising? It's so much more surprising than trouble; and it seems to go—in twins, so."

"What do you mean? Of course I'm glad my luck tickles you that way."

"It isn't only yours; I meant to tell you to-night in the dark. Oh, Betsey, I am, too! It's Mr. Wilbefore Dundee."

"Mr. Dundee! What's his salary?"

"I haven't asked him; but I know it's always increased when ministers marry; and the congregation gives donation parties; and he won't be so shy after he's married; and we'll soon have a bigger church."

"He's nice looking when he stops blushing; and he's a scholar, father says, and a good man if there ever was one. I guess you're doing well enough, Myrtle."

"And so are you, Betsey. Mr. Nubbs is a—a little—square built; but——"

"He's built that way inside, too. We'll have a double wedding," she added, putting out the candle. "We'd better send for Mary at once, and have it over, before either of the men has time to change his mind."

Thus it chanced that cheerful news reached Mary as she emerged from her darkened prison, and it was a pleasant thought that her recovery meant going home to aid her sisters in preparation for their coming happiness.

When the pale Queen came among them, fragile as Indian pipe found among the rustling brown woods of November, they insisted upon enthroning her in a chair and doing her homage.

"It isn't safe to sit still here," protested Mary, the day after her arrival; "one's in danger of being cut up for flounces. I'm going to help you girls. That's what I came home sooner for."

"Nonsense!" protested Myrtle. "You can't sew for us. If you use a needle, make something lovely for your own wear."

"Do you think I've forgotten how you and Betsey slaved for me once on a time?" asked Mary, with humid eyes. "Now I'm going to return your lendings."

It surprised her a little to find how naturally and easily she fell back into the routine of her old life. One morning as the three sat sewing together, the portly Mrs. Johnson appeared at the door, with a mouth full of pins and a heart full of woe.

"I'm so glad you've got back, Mary," she began. "There's nobody like you. I need you this minute. I'm having an awful time. Those pattern cutters ain't near as reliable as they used to be. I've been trying to cut a frock for Irene, and there's one breadth notched to go up-side-down."

"No, I can't stay. I just ran over to ask you about it. So you've got your old face back!" she gossiped on, after having been persuaded to take a rocking chair in the work room. "You'll be marrying, the next thing we hear. I never was more astonished than to hear about your sisters, both going off at once. They do say Betsey will have a veil."

Miss Scott had gone around the corner to buy a bolt of seam binding.

"Oh, yes, and white satin, and orange blossoms," laughed Myrtle. "She says it's business to do a thing thorough. She's running an account at her future husband's store and having it charged to Mrs. Nubbs."

"You don't say so! Well, he won't go back on her after that; he can't afford it. I suppose you heard of Mrs. Urmson's death, Mary."

"Yes," said the Queen, bending over her work. "It is strange to think it happened five months ago. Dr. Hilgard doesn't allow patients to hear exciting news of any sort. They told me when I came home."

"I may as well tell you one time as another: she hadn't been dead two months before Eugene was at my house asking if I knew your address. Looks like men's love turns cold before their wives' bodies. I told him to let you alone for a year if he knew what was good for him.

"It's better to let the old wife get cold
Before you go wooing a new one!"

"Oh, Mrs. Johnson!" exclaimed Mary remonstrantly.

"You needn't look so shocked. She's better off where she is. She wasn't the wife for Eugene. He never cared a snap of his fingers for her, except right at the first. She got to know it, and tried to pique him by carrying on with her old beau, Macalester. Gene found her writing him some silly note or fool verse or something, and let loose on her with a lot of sarcasm—said he despised silly women, and 'she didn't have sense enough to keep out of ink'! He told me himself—I've always known the boy, and he's been my doctor ever since he set up in practice—that she fell down on her knees before him then, and cried out that she loved him alone, and could not live without his forgiveness. He just flung out of the room—I reckon he'll always be sorry for that. He went away to Cartonville to perform some sort of operation. They telegraphed him, but it was all over before he could get here. She was dying with a little dead babe, born too soon, lying on her arm."

"Oh, my dream!" murmured Mary inadvertently, and flushed guiltily as soon as the words were out.

"Did you dream of it?"—with a sharp look. "My, but you're a beauty when you blush that way! Well, she died happy, after all, with Dr. Eugene holding her hand and vowing he'd never forget her. He cried hard at the funeral, too—I will say that for him—and he puts flowers on her grave. I reckon he can't help thinking of you and wanting to see you. A dead woman is a dead woman, if

she was a wife. A man can't talk to a grave any more 'n he can eat in one. I don't blame a widower for marrying. I think a sight more of a man with two wives in the cemetery and looking for a third than I do of a dried up old bachelor. A woman ought to praise that kind of men and encourage 'em for the good of her sex."

"Is—is Dr. Urmson in the city?" hesitated Mary.

"Not just now. He's gone somewhere, but he'll be back, don't you fret about that, honey."

Such a conversation rendered it the more disconcerting for Mary to be met at the gate by Myrtle next day, with the information:

"Mrs. Howard has been here, Mary; she wants you to sew for her again."

"What did you tell her, Myrtle?"

"I told her she'd have to see you. I didn't tell her what I thought, by any means. If I were you, I wouldn't sew for one of that family to save their lives."

"And yet, after all, why shouldn't I? We need the money for your clothes, and you can spare me. It would look marked to refuse. She might think I was afraid of meeting her brother, or that I had not forgiven him——"

"Well, have you?" asked Myrtle keenly. Gentle as this girl had been from the cradle, ever forgiving her own wrongs, she could not forgive nor forget Queen Mary's.

"I never think about it now," said Mary. "Perhaps my heart was bleached with my face. I suppose it has lived through too much to ever beat fast again. I may not look it, but I'm an old, old woman inside, Myrtle."

"Well, I could quarrel with Eugene Urmson's family if I were a hundred and fifty, inside and out."

"Quarrel—why should I?"

Yet Mary did not expect of herself quite the composure she felt on reëntering Mrs. Howard's pretty sewing-room. This had been the birthplace of her romance. Here had come the handsome young physician, taking the sewing basket forcibly from her lap, and answering his sister's reproof with what she had laughingly termed "counter irritants," one of them being:

"Baby's got a box of screws, Lou, and they're not a good prescription for a teething child; better run out and see to him." Mary smiled over those old times, as she sat sewing.

"It all seemed perfectly natural, not a bit awkward," she told Myrtle at night. "Mrs. Howard was a little self-conscious at first, but we were soon perfectly at ease together. She's having the loveliest frock made for Lula! It's edged with real Irish point."

She found it pleasant to sit in that room; it was like a box of

sweet memories. She thought the sunlight flowed along the floor like a golden sea, the shadows in it wrecks of old dreams drifting back. One day the long French window opened and Eugene entered so much in the old way that she almost fancied him one of the dreams, before it came upon her that this was reality, also that the wind from the open casement blew a little sharp, and that Eugene was looking ill. She almost hated her cold blood that let her sit and face him without a tremor or a heart-stir.

He was not so calm. "Mary, I had not expected this. It's the old face made perfect. The grave has given up its dead," he said in tremulous tones, evidently not at all sure as to how he might be received.

She gave him her hand, she felt his eyes on her face—hot eyes that seemed to burn her fairness; but she tried to speak naturally.

"How long have you been back, Eugene?"

"Only two days. I came past your house yesterday, but lacked the courage to go in."

"I'm sorry that you should feel like that. We would all be—I am glad to see you."

"Prove it, then, by putting down that infernal white stuff and coming outside with me. This room is stifling. Can't we walk?"

"Paid by the day, paid by the day," hummed Mary, resuming her low chair, and looking up at him with the old dimples, scattering like wind-blown pink petals in her smooth cheeks.

He turned suddenly white. "Come," he said almost roughly, rolling the cambric in a crushed bundle and tossing it to one side. "Of course my sister knows I want to talk with you. Where is your hat, Mary?"

She knew then why Mrs. Howard had vacated the room before he entered, but she told herself there was no reason why she should not get her hat and walk with him, and she did.

"The same black thatch above the rose trellis?" he asked when she joined him at the open window.

Mary laughed. "Not quite the same, Eugene. How many seasons do you think a hat lasts?" It was a quiet, poised Mary—a woman—who walked by his side; the sprite of the rain was gone forever. He felt a certain restraint stealing over him in the presence of this new Mary. She looked up at him with lovely, friendly eyes.

"It's such sweet weather, isn't it, Eugene?"

"A fall day always reminds me of *She* emerging from her fire bath. It is Indian summer, you know, when fair old things come back—the time for the reopening of flowers that thought themselves in bed for the winter, and the resurrection of old hopes that have been wept and mourned over——"

"Yes, autumn is a beautiful season. I think the poets who call it melancholy forget the Indian summer."

Was this the girl who had whistled "Yankee Doodle" before the sniggering crowd in the club banqueting hall?

"I suppose you know that my sisters are going to have one wedding day? We call it the twin wedding, and Alf and Eph think it's theirs. You'd scarcely believe it, but Betsey's the nervous one, although she does bargain for her wedding clothes over the counter of the man she's going to marry, and have them charged to his wife. She beats him down, too, in the prices. It's funny to see how seriously he takes it—actually stands up behind his counter and argues with her—'I can't afford to sell this a cent lower. Would you have me go under what I paid for it?' Neither of them seems to see anything farcical in his solemnly writing down, 'Due from Mrs. Nubbs to Mr. Nubbs, one bridal veil.'"

"I should like to see Betsey in her new rôle."

"She's been to the circus—said 'she might as well disgrace herself thoroughly while she was about it, it was good business methods to be thorough.' And she certainly is thorough—and so gay! Poor Mr. Nubbs can't be jealous—she owes him too much. He says she has things charged in the name of Mrs. Nubbs so that if she backs out he can't collect. Of course it's just their way; he really loves her, and wouldn't be false to her for anything, or she to him."

Eugene looked uncomfortable, and hastened to change the subject.

"I want to ask a favor."

"What is it, Eugene?" How naturally she spoke his name, never seeming to notice how it shook his hardly maintained calm. He had been so afraid she would affect a cold "Dr. Urmson," and now he half wished she would.

He laughed a little awkwardly to cover a deeper emotion. "We ate supper together once, just you and I. We had frosted cherries, and gilded Easter eggs in small blue cups. The biscuits were wrapped in snowy linen, summer hearts in winter loveliness. Pink roses decorated the table, which was so narrow I often leaned across it to——"

His voice failed him. A glance at her unconscious face and he finished:

"I wish we might have another little supper like that, Mary."

"Cherries don't ripen every time one chances to think of them; but we have delicious preserved ones. I'll give you a *petit souper à deux* any evening after the 'twin wedding.'"

Urmson glanced quickly sideways at the radiant woman. The

look with which he acknowledged the French words, so tripping from her tongue—like that with which he had already noted the greater elegances of her utterance, the very structure and finish of her sentences—was, in its essence, half hostile. Oh, he had prayed for Mary to come back; but he had certainly never intimated that he wanted a revised and improved Mary. Yet he only said:

"A little supper with pink roses, and just you and I?"

"Yes."

"Just like old times?"

She tried to say yes again; but she did not say the word loudly or with confidence. Instead, she murmured, "Why, you've brought me home. This is Memory Lane."

"It was unconsciously done; a trick of old habit. We will turn."

"No, it's too late now to do any more work to-day. I will go in. Please explain to your sister; perhaps"—with a faint little smile—"you'd better give the baby another box of screws."

Her soft hand, a queen's white, perfect hand, rested lightly in his. They were standing by the gate. Old emotions and memories swept over her; she was glad to have her heart alive—to have bridged the black gap in their relations; but whether that bridge would lead her to the true land of Heart's Desire was in her quiet mind still an unanswerable question.

"Good night," he said. "Good night, my—— Good night, Mary."

XI.

MARY did not see Eugene on the following day, nor did his sister refer to him. Her engagement with Mrs. Howard soon came to a close, and as weeks slipped by the episode of meeting her old lover seemed almost like a dream, so absorbed did she become in the preparation for her sisters' wedding. In due course arrived the day when the young minister—in response to formal demands from an older minister—found something to say besides his stock assertions that he had "called round" and it was "a fine evening;" and Mr. Nubbs took to himself the lady whose account against him figured so largely on his books. That night a little note came to Mary by mail. It was only:

The '*petit souper*'?

EUGENE.

The next evening she went out into the big grassy yard which was in the rear of the little Scott place, out under the trees whose boughs had tapped so lovingly at her window during her hours of

trouble. Betsey and Myrtle were married and gone. Her father she saw very little of. A publisher more discriminating than the rest had found Alfred Scott's translation of Virgil good, and the old scholar was happily revising proofs, and giving the finishing touches to that volume which was to be the flower of his gentle, harmless life. Her mother was, as usual, occupied with the ubiquitous twins, who could not be comforted because the wedding had turned out, at last, not to be theirs. The boys were all scattered at their several employments and amusements. She felt alone, eager for any pleasant companionship, and was glad that Eugene was coming. Yet, somehow, a curious lassitude and distaste hampered all her preparations for the small event. She halted between the two big, sturdy old rose trees, one pink and one red. Eugene had asked for the pink. Her hand moved toward that bush, when there came to her mind roses of the past laid on the lap of a sick girl.

"The pink roses are sacred to him—God bless him!" she said, remembering Hilgard with a rush of emotion.

"Mary!" called her mother, as she saw the girl lingering among the roses. "There's a letter from your doctor. It's addressed to father. He's going through to be married to that Miss Beatrice Ironton next week. Do you want to see it?"

Mary looked up from her roses. "No," she said sharply. Then she smiled. "I wonder why women shrink from the mating of their men friends," she mused. "A friendship, like heaven, should have no question of marrying and giving in marriage." Her hands went out definitely to the red roses. "Eugene will not notice—the red are just as pretty," she told herself.

But Eugene did notice. "I asked for pink roses," he said. "They are the ones we had before; no others are half so beautiful. What are roses—colored spectacles—rosy dreams? Pink—pink! Rose-color—and that means the color of love."

"Do you like pink so much?" Mary flushed guiltily.

"It is the early morning, the ribbon in the dairy-maid's sweet-hearting dress, the blush on soft cheeks, the rose trellis under a black thatch."

"Aren't you rather a fastidious guest? You order the feast, and then grumble about it"—softening the speech with a sweetly friendly look from the blue eyes. "But I am sorry the table doesn't suit."

"Oh, it is pretty!" he hastened penitently, looking with approbation at the gilded eggs in tiny blue cups; the white wire toast-rack trimmed with green leaves; the doll-like set of old blue china; delicate little circular sandwiches, with the dainty green frill of lettuce leaf protruding around the edges; and the frosted cherries on cracked ice. The shades were drawn, and candles lit in an old

fashioned candelabrum. Mary, a bunch of the sumptuous red roses in her bright curls, a muslin apron girdling her dull blue gown, looked the very brightness and joy of life incarnate, with a dewy freshness inexpressible in words, as she seated herself opposite him at the narrow table.

"I'm sorry about the roses," she repeated, with sudden gravity.

"I didn't think you'd mind. Pardon me."

"I was rude. Forgive *me*. Please forgive me, Mary."

She was silent a moment, then said, with a little, kind smile:

"I sell my indulgences."

"Well, and what are your terms, Mary?"

"That between us you never again use those words, 'forgive me.'"

"You know that I must," he said in a low voice.

"If there is, or ever was, anything to forgive, all is forgiven—freely forgiven. If we are to be friends, Eugene, never recall the past. All its mistakes and pains are gone by. Don't you know what Tennyson says of dead selves? My past sepulchres my dead self. After—that—that——" She shook her head, with something like a little shiver, and her right hand fluttered, too, as though putting away something, repudiating, denying the possibility of describing it. Her eyes sought his, and looked uncertainly away. She took up her words more resolutely:

"After an agony that was a death to me, I entered a grave; my new self is all new now. Let the old wrongs and mistakes and offenses be buried with my old thoughts. I wasn't a nice girl, Eugene; I was worse than wicked—I was silly. Fools really do the world much more harm than the wicked people; they dare to rush in so! I'm very heartily ashamed of my old self; let us forget her."

"You ask an impossibility—your very home is Memory Lane, Mary," came Urmson's low, intense voice.

"Nothing is impossible that must be; I have found that out. But come, you're not eating; the toast will be cold."

He looked at the dainty little table, at the beautiful, radiant girl facing him. "Just like old times," sighed the man, harking back to the forbidden topic unconsciously.

So it was, thought Mary—only a few differences: the roses were red, not pink; in place of tiny, dainty French rolls, the toast, which is, after all, warmed-over bread; and instead of fruit fresh from the trees, these cherries in their little white jackets of beaten egg and sugar, and on their bed of cracked ice, were only canned cherries.

Nor—whatever he might say—was it quite the same to Eugene. Opposite him to-night sat no merely pretty girl, to be kissed between bites of a cherry, but a woman secure in her own kingdom, poised

upon her own disciplined soul; a woman whom he found it not easy, despite her ravishing girlish loveliness, to approach openly with proffers of love.

"It is at least an innocent little feast, Eugene," she said, looking across at him with sweet deprecation, "even if it is rather lenten fare. No birds, no little furred or scaly brothers and sisters, have been slain to furnish it forth."

He laughed. "You have changed since the day you put a live goldfish in your mouth."

"Oh, Eugene! Did I do that?" Her mother-of-pearl skin flushed rosily.

"And bit it because it squirmed."

"You remember better than I do;" and the flush deepened painfully.

"That's very true, Mary. Oh, let me speak! I treasure every word that we ever uttered to each other. My heart has never wavered in its true fealty to you. I start up at night with your voice in my ears. You are continually in my dreams, in waking visions. I have seen you again and again when—when I seemed most to have—to be contenting myself without you. Mary, I could have sworn that you were at the vestry door the night of my wedding."

"I was there, Eugene."

"God forgive me!"

"Never mind now. It's all over. Forget it, as I have."

"Forget! If a man could only buy that power! Mary, the years between our—that wretched farewell of ours and to-night have been—well, they've been unreal to me. Struggle against it as I would, my love for you has always drowned and driven out every other influence. I did not realize all that you were to me until I—had made memory a crime. I was dazed, frantic, with the loss of you, of all you had been to me; and I—of course I can't—I mustn't go into that; but I—I made a pitiful mistake. Men can't love twice. There is but one grand soul expression; all other feelings are a false mirage of the true city beautiful. Mary, don't tell me to forget the past—not all of it. Can't it be brought back? May I, after all, have my pink roses, love, love——"

As he bent over her, the lover of her youth, handsome, eager eyed, the familiar of her girlish dreams, hopes, regrets, Mary wondered a little sadly at her quiet pulses, her calm heart.

"I have expiated my mistake in hells of suffering. Mary, Queen, cannot those bitter years be bridged? Will you not trust me again?"

No answer came to the girl's lips; and Urmson hurried on passionately: "Mary, there was never any woman on earth for me but you.

When I lost you I was not brave enough, not noble enough, to stand still in my agony, to suffer and endure, to be chastened by bereavement. My floundering heart reached blindly for some compensation, some substitute. I thought—I thought honestly I had found one—as though the lover of a queen could ever forget her! Mary—Mary, have mercy on the old heart hunger, on the lonely hours, when all the world was but a painted figure without a soul, because you—my soul—were not by me!”

She drooped a little toward him; his arms, home of her old love, were stretched out, fain to close around her. She tried hard to feel herself the Mary of old, to believe that she would find in those arms the absolute fulfilment of all her dreams which had once been there for her.

Nay, too much had come and gone since those days; it is not given to the children of men to be exactly that which they were a year gone—a month past—yesterday.

Mary half closed her eyes, that she might the better dream things other than they were, and, schooling her heart to docility, she would have resigned herself to Urmson's caresses. But even as his hands touched her his arms straightened with a start; her lithe, healthy body stiffened and sprang back in an instant hurt amazement, so that it was almost as though he pushed her from him. Her blue eyes flashed open, to see his burning ones full of incredulous terror fastened upon her.

“What's the matter with your face?” he whispered.

Mary had seen that look in her lover's eyes before. Then, a poor, crude child, irresponsible, utterly trusting, adoring him with all the unreserve and abandon of a guileless, passionate nature, the sudden shock of that look in his eyes had almost cost her her reason. Now its repetition brought a tide of overwhelming bitterness and horror. But this was no sick child to whom he spoke; nor was it a woman who trusted him and longed for him, who looked to his hand for all the good gifts of life.

“I don't know, Eugene,” the girl answered, with upflung head, and delicate fingers raised to her cheeks, where the white and red were oddly mottled. Then she added quietly, deliberately: “It has been stinging a little unpleasantly all evening. I thought I must have touched something that poisoned me when I was gathering the roses. I have a very delicate skin, you know.”

“No, it's not that! I wish I could believe it was no worse.” Poor faithless lover! He turned from her and flung himself into his chair, regarding the floor moodily, his glance avoiding so much as the hem of her white skirts. “My God, Mary!” he groaned, “there's no happiness for us.” Then he burst out with a sudden febrile

fury: "I told Hilgard the thing wasn't curable! I warned him that he was only preparing a torture for both of us when he attempted to cure it, with his tinkering empiricism!"

At mention of Hilgard's name Mary's face became more composed. She looked down at the big man in his chair—an ignoble figure—and realized that she had a petulant child to deal with.

"Never mind, Eugene," she said gently. "After all, this is my sorrow. I must bear it; my friends can only try to help me—it doesn't press quite so heavily on them, you know." She was thinking only of Hilgard and how he had tried to help her, unknown to him as she was; but Urmson turned an eye of misery upon her.

"Do you really think I could marry you, and see you look like you once did, and not cut my throat? I tell you, Mary, you have no idea what I suffered then!"

The girl drew back with all a proud woman's repugnance at the idea that she was offered undesired.

"Marry me!" she repeated sharply. "We were not discussing marriage, Eugene, but my lifelong disfigurement and sorrow. If the thing is to come back on me——"

"Oh, it is—there's no hope—the indications are plain!" interjected Urmson, with the monstrous egotism, the corroding selfishness, of a thwarted passion.

"That being so—good by," said Mary, putting out her hand to him. "Please go at once."

There was an edge in the kind, smooth voice that galvanized the peevish, ungallant coward and brought him to his feet.

"I must set the house of my soul in order, to entertain a familiar guest—sorrow. It shall never hold despair again, nor hate. And—and, Eugene—we can always be friends, I hope."

Did Urmson—panic stricken as he was, the baser side of him all up in arms—see in this, despite her dignified withdrawal, her almost sharp dismissal of himself, an attempt to retain a hold upon him as a lover—a possible husband? It would seem so. He bent toward her a countenance upon which struggled greed of the beauty and sweetness of her, terror of her threatened fate.

"Friends!" he repeated, and he looked past her a little wildly. "Friends, hope—there are such things in the world for people—they're not for me! I can't stay here—you couldn't expect that. I shall have to flee from this new sorrow—go abroad, get into hospital work again. I can't stay here. You mustn't—expect it. I can't! But I shan't marry again, and in your—your affliction—you may always know that I am your well-wisher—always your best friend!"

Her best friend! God pity her, how desolate indeed she must be if this were so!

XII.

MARY stood at the open door and watched her poor renegade go. The night had laid murmuring lips to the city; there yet hung in the air the song of retreating footsteps, of far-off carriage wheels; once a man's lowered tones, a girl's gay laughter, came to her from the more pretentious avenue. But Memory Lane was a byway and quiet.

As she stood looking down, clutching desperate hands at the bosom of her gown, she realized, now that the man was gone, the old horror that had crept anew into her life. When this unspeakable thing had overwhelmed her before, Hilgard was the only help—the only real help—God sent her. Hilgard! He was going to be married—he was on his way to a bride now. But that, she knew, would make no difference in his unfailing kindness to her, as to all suffering humanity. He would have courage to face a losing fight with her, and patch what might be out of the days the Lord gave her under the sun.

"I must see the letter," she whispered. "I need to know where—when——"

She turned and slipped softly back into the dining-room. Her father sat by the table, so happily absorbed in proof-reading that she thought it of no use to question him then. Instead, she searched his coat hanging on the wall. As she had anticipated, in one of the scholar's pockets, where bills and letters were wont to be stuffed promiscuously until they overflowed, Hilgard's handwriting was soon found. He had written briefly.

DEAR MR. SCOTT:

I shall be passing through your city about September 9th, on my way to Baltimore to fulfil an old agreement which was made between my deceased friend and partner, Dr. E. G. Ironton, and myself years ago. The marriage of Miss Ironton, to be solemnized on the tenth, will recall to Mary the painting of Beatrice, which she so much admired at the sanitarium. I am not sure whether Mary is at home now or not. If I knew she was there, I should find time to stop; for I want to see both you and her.

Faithfully yours,

ROBERT HILGARD.

She went quietly through the small front room out on the little porch, not knowing that the old man's eyes followed her.

"I need the night and its tale of big issues," she said. Yet when she was there she found herself fain to turn back to the lighted room, with its little human concreteness.

There are hours when the soul balks at the shadow of mortality,

and reason needs to walk in the dust, and lead it by. Mary faced such a crisis. She was a creature to whom love is a necessity—she must be first with some one—so had beauty been given her to bring answer to the call! But her own heart had cheated her of Eugene—it laughed now at thought of love and him; and Hilgard, who had commanded the deeps in her nature—Hilgard, on his way to a bride!—what room could there be in his full life for her?

"Thank God, I'm no longer afraid of life without happiness," she said. Yet her fingers closed convulsively around the little heart-shaped amulet which rose and fell upon her stormy breast. Oh, she must see him—she would ask only that. Nothing could be so terrifying, so vaguely hideous, after she had seen him. This one longing battered down all weaker feelings—all objection, all doubts. Her whole body trembled to its intensity as she pressed the amulet and stared out into the dark, her entire being one prayer, one demand upon the cosmos.

And suddenly that prayer, that demand, was answered. Just as it had come before, but familiar now and dear, Hilgard's face bodied itself forth from the darkness, and smiled reassuringly into her eyes.

"Robert!" she cried aloud. "Is it you—is it really you? Where are you? Oh, come to me! Help me—I need you so dreadfully!"

Unconsciously her fingers relaxed upon the amulet, and the face dislimned in air. But next instant, "Yes, here I am," answered a full, manly voice from beyond the circle of light; and Hilgard himself strode swiftly forward and took both of Mary's outstretched hands in a strong clasp.

Memory Lane, where it passed Mary's gate, had been trodden by the feet of lovers many a night. The woman in the doorway knew that—it was an old story to her; but never for a moment did she rate Hilgard as one of those pilgrims. Yet there was something boyish, nervous, hurried, about him, very foreign to her idea of this strong, cool, poised personality. She had to remind herself that he was on his way to his wedding, and would be likely to seem different; otherwise she might have thought— A rush of color flooded even her brow. She could not wholly conceal her agitation.

"Won't you— Can't you— Will you come in?" she murmured confusedly.

"It's absurdly late," returned Hilgard in an odd, shaken voice—"after ten o'clock. I've been pacing up and down this street for a quarter of an hour. Memory Lane, Mary—Memory Lane! My train was delayed. Then I saw your light. I—Mary, I saw Urmson come out. You didn't—you haven't—" The deep, vibrant voice faltered, then broke off.

"No, no," answered Mary, half absently. So much of greater spiritual importance had come and gone in the brief interval since Urmson's departure, that his figure dwindled to that of a pouting child denied a sugar cake.

Hilgard mutely touched her shoulder and turned her to the light. Even his eyes, habitually indifferent to mere physical beauty, were dazzled by such loveliness.

"Why—why—why, is this Hebe, this radiant girl with the very springtime in her face—is this my pale little patient? Mary!"

She drew back from the mad hope that his look, his voice, inspired.

"What is it, Mary? Have I frightened you?" he asked tenderly. "Has my head been visiting you lately?"—then, under his breath: "My heart has often enough."

"Yes," said Mary. "Forgive me; I needed you desperately—and I called you. It was selfish—I had no right—I will never do it again." Her self-disciplined nature rose to make the sacrifice. She was ready, at that moment, to accept what life gave, to wish Robert Hilgard's wife well, and to thank God again that she had learned to live pleasantly without happiness. Her hand went to the amulet. To her thought, it constituted a very intimate bond. Could she, ought she to wear it, now that he was to belong to another woman? She felt sure it would never bring her the vision of any face but his. Resolutely she drew the chain forward.

"I wish you'd take it off for me," she said gently. "I can't bear to. I feel as though I were giving up more than a material blessing; but it must be."

Hilgard bent to undo the bauble from the beautiful soft neck whose pearly white was almost lustrous—a strange electric thrill ran up his fingers from the thread of metal. He remembered who had clasped the chain, and whom her girlish promise had privileged to unclasp it. Struggling in the grasp of strong emotion, not expressive where his deepest feelings were concerned, he stood looking down on the heart-shaped trinket in his palm.

The human soul is a lonely thing in its ultimate agonies. Mary was only thinking that the wrench, now it was come, was more dreadful than she could have imagined. She could not, like happy people who suffer ordinary bereavements, lay her head away; she could not turn her back upon a love that had been given in vain, and cherish memories, or forget, as time would let her. She must come begging, to this man out of all the world, for an alms of pity and help; she must keep him before her—must go to him in the first flush of his happiness as the bridegroom of another woman—go and thrust her misery upon him. In upon her soul flowed the bitterness of all the bereaved, defeated, rejected, shamed creatures of earth;

she felt her strength to do this thing deserting her. She must be quick or she would fail piteously—ignominiously. She struggled for her voice, found it, grasped desperately at the first poor forlorn straw of a conventional speech which mercifully floated her way, and whispered:

"I do remember Miss Ironton's picture—she is indeed lovely. I hope she is very happy." She choked, but held bravely on: "And you too. If the prayers of a faithful heart like mine can bring down blessings on you, they'll come."

"Beatrice is marrying a good fellow," said Hilgard absently, his eyes on Mary's face. "I promised her father to give her the care I would a sister; and I am satisfied with the match. Humanly speaking, it's a perfect one."

Used as she was to the practicality of Hilgard's speech and mind, Mary could scarcely credit this as the reply of a bridegroom. She sank down on a little seat and looked up at him with eyes which pathetically overflowed with love and longing and a struggling, half-drowned hope.

"I thought you—I thought she——" The whispered words trailed off into silence.

"Mary," said Hilgard suddenly, "why do you talk to me of Beatrice and her marriage to Brant? I come here to-night to ask you to marry me——" He broke off abruptly, then: "What did you mean when you answered me as you did just now about Urmson? I—I won't be put off another minute."

"Robert!" she said in a terrible voice. The cup was offered—it was at her lips—her own hand must dash it down. It was but a different martyrdom. "I—didn't like to trouble you," she went on in a spent tone—"I didn't like to trouble you with this when I thought you were on your way to your marriage. But, Robert—you must forget all—forget what you've just said—and—I'm in dreadful distress! Look, and see what you think. Nobody but you ever gave me any comfort about it."

"What is it?" demanded Hilgard, all the eagerness, the joy, gone out of his voice. "Is it about Urmson?"

"My face—my face!" wailed Mary. "The old horror is coming back. Oh, Robert!"

Hilgard's brown eyes glowed. "Then, you did send him away? I thought so. I hoped so. I've given him his chance—God knows whether I ought to have done it or not—and now comes mine. Mary, do you love me?"

"No—no!" cried Mary, thrusting her happiness away from her with desperate hands. "Don't you understand? Won't you understand? I'm not for you—nor him—nor any man. I tell you I'm

to be tortured. I'm smitten of God—set apart." The high, strained voice sank to a piteous whisper. "My face is breaking out again. Oh, look at it, Robert!"

With a sort of inarticulate cry, Hilgard took her strongly in his arms, disregarding her half-hearted protests, pillowed the golden head on his broad breast, laid his cheek for a moment against hers.

"Mary, do you love me?" he murmured. "Yes—yes, child, I am looking at your face. Do you love me? I want to hear you say it. I'll talk about anything you want me to afterward."

She looked full into his eyes with her brimming ones. "Afterward will be too late," she breathed. "What have I ever done but love and lean on you and find my happiness there? But it's wrong—it's wicked—for me to tell you so. Because I love you, Robert, I couldn't let you marry a leper like me."

"Whatever you may call yourself, Mary, you're the woman I love and want. Do you love me? You haven't really answered my question—and it's the only thing of any importance to us—and I—dearest, I so long to hear my answer."

"Do you really mean that you could love a creature such as I was when you first saw me? Think of my face as it was then. Oh, Robert, I could not bear to see *you* turn from me with loathing—I'd rather not be near you in my misery."

Hilgard looked down at the trembling young creature in his arms. He saw he had to deal with a condition which was almost mania.

"Sit down, dear," he said gently. "Now let me take both your hands. We'll sit where you can look full in my face while I tell you about this fellow who is to be your husband. I love you, Mary; not merely your beauty, which is only one small manifestation of the sweetness God gave you. I love you and want you for my own, whatever comes. If the trouble returns with great severity—if your face is disfigured so that it is mortifying to you—why, you'll need me and my love and care, more than you could now—as you are—you beautiful, beautiful creature! And that love can't fail you, my darling! It was never given to the beautiful face. We'll go back to the little mask; or you and I will go away from other people, and live in some sweet place, secluded, where I can wait upon you and serve you, and you need not be seen by others. There are no ulcers on your soul, Mary. If there were, that might be serious. Now, dear, do you love me? Will you marry me?"

When he had his answer, full and satisfying to a man's heart, he raised his head and looked at her with his little, quizzical half-smile. "Now I'm willing to examine that rash you complain of," he said gently.

"It isn't a rash," explained Mary, trembling, doubting, hanging upon his look, his words. "My face did sting this afternoon, and Eugene said—I don't know what he saw; but it"—watching Hilgard's eyes—"it must be dreadful, for he said there wasn't any hope. He felt terribly. Don't you see it? But you looked at me calmly when I was the worst. Oh, don't deceive me, Robert!"

"Mary—Mary—Mary!" Hilgard laughed out in sudden full relief, and his tone carried blessed conviction to the girl's tortured mind. "What a poor doctor's wife you promise to make!—quoting another physician—and with not a symptom on that flower of a face to show for it! There's nothing the matter with these cheeks, love"—he kissed first one, then the other, as one would kiss a child's fair dimpled beauty—"except that they're too exquisite for everyday use. Painful emotions will register themselves—for awhile yet—on this sensitive skin, and your emotions have been deeply stirred." He looked keenly into her eyes. "I—I only wish I felt as sure of another thing as I do that we will never have any serious trouble with your face, that what difficulty we have will be quickly subdued." His gaze still dwelt searchingly upon her. "I wish I were as sure——"

"As sure of what?" She lifted anxious eyes to his.

"Mary," he broke out sharply, "I said awhile ago I had given Urmson his chance. It was not that so much—it was not that at all. It was you, dear, you that I thought I must give the chance to."

"Me, Robert?" she faltered. "A chance——"

"Dearest, you laid your young girl's heart very open to me in that long, blind time when you made me your comforter and father confessor; maybe you laid it more open than you knew; certainly neither of us realized how much it all meant to—me. When you told me so pitifully that Urmson had ceased to care for you when your beauty was gone, when you showed me that your love was always his, I didn't understand just why it hurt me so. And I knew that Gene Urmson's wife was dead—that you would find a suitor when you came home with the beautiful face I was struggling so hard to restore to you."

Comprehension dawned in Mary's eyes. "Oh, dearest!" she breathed.

"But I let you come home—I felt that, if your heart was irrevocably bound up with Urmson's—no matter his worthiness or unworthiness—I must let you go—to him—without a word to prejudice his suit with you. And oh, Mary, when I saw him come out to-night, out from this dear little house, speeded by my darling—then I knew the fool I had been!"

"No—no—no——" began Mary, smiling through tears; but Robert broke in upon her.

"It's what I want to know, Mary; it's what I want to be sure of. I am not cunning, not versed in love. Is your heart mine? Does it really turn to me—fly to me for its home of love? Or will it always"—his voice hesitated, his eyes pleaded earnestly with hers—"always cling, a little, to the first——"

"Oh, Robert, Robert!" cried Mary, slipping both arms around his neck, pressing her cheek, now wet with tears, against his.

Alfred Scott, who, roused from his work, had looked into the room without disturbing them, came quietly across and stepped outside for his night walk, closing the door behind him. There was a sound of feet hurrying, almost running, down Memory Lane. It was Urmson—Urmson driven back by the ghost of two lost years. Seeing a figure at the door, he cried out:

"Mary! I've come back, Mary!"

But it was no radiant woman who stepped out into the soft night to meet him. A bent old man, a blue-covered book suspended from his left hand, stood before the threshold.

"Wait, my friend," said Alfred Scott, and his voice was one of sympathy. "I feel it is best for you to know before you enter."

"I do know," said the young man impatiently. "She's there—I have seen her."

"Has she told you?"

"Told me what? Let me see her. Surely you do not mean to hinder me—to interfere! I tell you I could not give her up now—not for any disfigurement, not for any obstacle. Nothing could tear my devotion from her now. I know my own heart to-night. I—I have tried facing life without Mary."

The old man's fingers came gently away from the knob of the closed door. "Sit here a moment." He pushed the impatient lover into a porch chair. "I have a few words that must be said. You must listen. Men are forced to hear death sentences; men have strong souls, and the breath of divinity is breathed into them, that they may find courage to listen to the unalterable decisions of the gods." Eugene stared at him.

"My boy, a beautiful woman is a gift of the gods. They do not urge on man their benefits; they do not offer twice to the mortal impious enough to reject the first favor. One night, down there by the river, my little girl prayed to be saved from suicide, while your wedding march was playing. She was saved; her cheerfulness, her beauty, restored; and you came again into her life. I believed that she loved you, and offered no objection. Even now I would spare you if I could. I know the pain of walking on hot ploughshares."

"Spare me? My punishment!"

"Eugene, it is the gods, and not Mary, who prepared this reprisal. She did not know—the man of her choice came within the hour."

"Yes—yes," panted Urmson. "I was here less than an hour ago. Mary had all but said yes to me when I—when there seemed to be—— Why do you look at me so strangely? I tell you I was here an hour ago."

He grasped the arms of the chair in which he sat, and leaned forward in the dusk, searching old Alfred's face with burning eyes.

The two had spoken in hushed tones. Now that a pause came, the voices of Mary and Hilgard were audible within the house.

"The man of her choice," whispered Urmson.

Alfred Scott talked on gently. "I heard you go, Dr. Urmson. Mary came into my room after your departure to seek for something. I glanced at her—and avoided meeting her eyes. The man of my daughter's choice, who came to claim her within the hour, is Dr. Robert Hilgard. I thought I should warn you of this before you entered."

The wide horror and despair of the eyes that looked up at him made the old scholar hold out his little blue book.

"Virgil is sometimes—comforting," he faltered. "You—may have—my copy, Eugene."

The door had been closed very gently; now its worn latch fell free; the portal swung slowly inward, as though it said: "You may see her again. Behold all you have lost, and see the reward of those who truly love."

Through the gold square of the doorway he saw the Queen's face—radiant, beautiful, the sad lines his words, his act, had drawn there only an hour ago erased, the whole countenance cheered, consoled, like a trusting child's. And this face which shone upon and drew him as the moon the sea was raised to Hilgard's. The amulet lay broken at their feet. Their lips met.

Urmson sprang up; he had no strength to speak to the old man, no courage to remain and face Mary now. Alfred Scott watched his tall figure stride out of the gate that shut his dreams behind him, and disappear down Memory Lane.



Little *stings* will happen in the best regulated families.

Friendship is of divine origin, but it has served the Devil for many a purpose.

Nothing is more pitiable than a professional humorist at his wits-end.

THE IRISH FAIRIES

By Seumas MacManus

Author of "A Lad of the O'Friels," "Donegal Fairy Stories," etc.

THAN the Irish fairies hardly any other beings, natural or supernatural, have been more written of and discussed, more abused and more travestied, more misunderstood.

What are the fairies? Not many of those who write about them seem to know. Indeed, those who are even more familiar with them than the writers are not in perfect accord as to what they are.

They have two theories. One is that the Tuatha de Danaan race, which was a race skilled in arts and crafts and magic, and which peopled Ireland before the coming of the Milesians, were finally overthrown by the more warlike Milesian people; and then, assuming enchanted form, they retired under the hills, where as immortals they lived. The more plausible theory, however, the one which is getting a stronger grip on the imagination of the Irish, and is almost universally adhered to, is that the fairies are fallen angels. When Lucifer rebelled in heaven, a certain portion of the angels joined his standard, another portion joined Michael's opposing army, and still a third portion of the angelic inhabitants of paradise chose to await the issue of the fight before declaring themselves. When Michael had subdued and cast down into hell Lucifer and his following, he turned his attention to the non-committal ones. He punished them and cast them out also, but, as they had not been positively rebellious, he cast them not into hell and eternal punishment; they were flung down upon the earth; a portion of them, falling into the sea, became mermaids and mermen; other portions, falling upon dry land, became fairies. This is the theory almost universally credited in Ireland, and it is a likely theory, too.

The fairies live in hope of final redemption. The Irish fairy is almost always friendly to man, because he calculates that in the human race (which is beloved of God and for which God's Son died) he may have a most valuable intercessor. The Irish fairy, then, is a kindly, beneficent being, anxious and willing to befriend man, and only revenging himself upon man when man wantonly wrongs him by interfering with the bush or the hill or the pleasant spot in which he has his habitation or to which he resorts for recreation.

As illustrative of the hope of redemption in which they live, a beautiful story is told:

Father Phil McColrick was a pious priest who flourished in Donegal three-quarters of a century ago. Father Phil, grown very old, and riding upon a prudent gray mare that had grown old along with him, was returning from a sick call in the heart of the hills one October night. It was bordering on midnight when he headed for home. It was bright moonlight, so that the white mountain road was clear and plain to be seen ahead of him as far as his eye could carry. Father Phil's old mare had an ambling pace of her own which suited herself and suited her master likewise. At this pace she was ambling onward over the mountain road, while Father Phil, seated on her back, with head bent, was murmuring his prayers. Suddenly he got a shock, for the old mare stood stock-still, nearly casting him over her head. When he recovered his position he looked forward, and, behold! the mountain road, that a few minutes before had been lone and white and bare, was now covered with an unending train of little people, thousands upon thousands of them, the front of which reached right up to his old mare's head. For some minutes he was too dazed to speak, but when he got his speech he asked in God's name who they were and what they wanted. One of them spoke out, saying:

"We are the Good People from all the ends of the earth; we have gathered and come together here this night to meet you and to put to you a question."

"What is the question?" asked Father Phil.

"Once and for all," said the spokesman, "we want it decided whether there is any hope that we shall ever get back to heaven again."

Father Phil bent his head and deliberated before replying; when he lifted his head again he said, "Go back to where you came from, and don't ask me that question."

"No, no, no; we'll not go back without our answer," and the "no, no, no," that came from that vast multitude was like a wind sweeping over a reedy lake. "Past here you will not get till you give us true reply," said the spokesman.

Thereupon Father Phil bent his head again and prayed for several minutes. When he looked up once more, his countenance was sorrowful, and he said, "Well, good people, since you insist on a reply, a reply you must have, and my reply is this: that, if in the thousands upon thousands of you whom I here see before me, there be as much blood as would sit on the point of a needle, then there is a chance for you;" and the moment he uttered those words, a wail, the most heartrending that human ear ever heard, went up from that

immense multitude. A gust of wind swept past the old priest, making him tremble and shiver, and when he looked ahead again, behold! he saw only the long, lone, bare, white mountain road.

Yet God has left with these creatures a deal of the joyousness which was theirs in paradise. The Irish fairy is essentially a joyous, careless, playful being—a lover of pleasant places, smooth round knolls, spreading hawthorns, white moonlights, sweeping steeds, sweet music, and gay dances. There is marrying and giving in marriage amongst them; sometimes they even fall in love with handsome human beings, pretty maidens and manly youths, and carry them off to bestow on them immortality in their blithesome company. By extraordinary human efforts, the stolen youths are sometimes won back to the natural world and its ills again, but this is rare. Sometimes a man or woman is borrowed temporarily by the fairies—just for the mischief of the thing; the abducted one is usually whisked off to strange foreign scenes and, in the course of a few hours or one night, whisked round half the world and shown wonderful sights before being left safe and sound on the same spot from which he or she was snatched away.

There is one kind of fairy, and one only, which, unlike the rest of the tribe, is not joyous; this is the Banshee. The Banshee is a little woman dressed in white, with raven black hair, which falls and flows loosely around her. She attaches herself to the favored and ancient families, and only on the eve of a disaster to the family—usually a death—does she disclose herself to human sense. On all such occasions she is heard, but far more rarely seen. She generally sits upon a limb of a tree convenient to the house for whose coming sad fate she mourns, and lifts up her voice three times in weird, heartrending wail. When the Banshee's cry is heard, death follows certainly and soon. The night watcher who hears it rises up through the dead hours and prostrates himself in prayer for the soul that will so soon depart. Fortunately, it is not given to the dying one to hear this weird wail; sometimes only one person hears it, at other times it is heard by all except the fated one, and all arise from their beds, coming together in terror to tell each other what they have heard, to shake their heads in sorrow and to pray.

The Banshee cries not for hucksters or plebeians; distinguished is the family that it waits upon, and proud is that family in the knowledge that the Good People honor it so highly as to delegate one of their tribe to watch over its destinies and mourn its disasters.

A fine description of the wailing of the Banshee is given in Clarence Mangan's translation from the Irish of Pierce Ferriter, of

the Lamentation for the Death of Maurice Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry, who was killed in 1642. Here it is:

There was lifted up one voice of woe,
 One lament of more than mortal grief,
 Through the wide South to and fro,
 For a fallen chief.
 In the dead of night that cry thrilled through me;
 I looked out upon the midnight air!
 Mine own soul was all as gloomy,
 And I knelt in prayer.

O'er Loch Gur that night, once—twice—yea, thrice.
 Passed a wail of anguish for the brave
 That half-curdled into ice
 Its moon-mirroring wave.
 Then uprose a many-toned wild hymn in
 Choral swell from Ogra's dark ravine,
 And Mogeely's phantom women
 Mourned the Geraldine!

Far on Carah Mona's emerald plains
 Shrieks and sighs were blended many hours,
 And Fermoy in fitful strains
 Answered from her towers.
 Youghal, Keenalmeaky, Eemokilly,
 Mourned in concert, and their piercing keen
 Woke to wondering life the stilly
 Glens of Inchiqueen.

From Loughmore to yellow Dunanore
 There was fear; the traders of Tralee
 Gathered up their golden store,
 And prepared to flee;
 For in ship and hall, from night till morning
 Showed the first faint beamings of the sun,
 All the foreigners heard the warning
 Of the dreaded one!

"This," they spake, "portendeth death to us
 If we fly not swiftly from our fate!"
 Self-conceited idiots! thus
 Ravingly to prate!
 Not for base-born, higgling Saxon trucksters
 Ring laments like those by shore and sea!
 Not for churls with souls of hucksters
 Waileth our Bansheel!

For the high Milesian race alone
 Ever flows the music of her woe!
 For slain heir to bygone throne,
 And for chief laid low!
 Hark! . . . Again, methinks, I hear her weeping
 Yonder! Is she near me now, as then?
 Or was't but the night-wind sweeping
 Down the hollow glen

Another particular kind of fairy that is frequent—though not so frequent as one would wish—is the Leipreachaun. He is a lucky fellow to find. He is the fairies' shoemaker. In the early mornings or the late evenings, or even in the dim noonday of the dark woods, he may be found sitting under a low bush, pegging away at his shoes. I should say he may be heard; to see and find him is more difficult. Fortunate is the man who, coming on the Leipreachaun unawares, gets grip of him by the scuff of the neck, and, maintaining a firm hold, keeps his eye unwaveringly fixed upon the tricky little fellow. This lad always knows where a crock of gold is hidden, and is prepared to purchase his freedom by disclosing its hiding-place, but before giving away his secret he will have resort to every imaginable device to get himself free, unransomed. While you keep your eyes fixed on him, he cannot escape, but if for a fraction of a second you lift your eyes off the lad, he will have vanished through your fingers. Consequently, when he finds himself in your hands, he will try by every trick in his fancy to make you look elsewhere. You must not mind his plans or his pleadings, his tricks or his schemes, but be steadily watching him and assure him that in your grip he must remain until he discloses where the crock lies hidden. Eventually, when he has in vain tried every means of diverting your attention—which presupposes you to be alert beyond the ordinary—he will name for you the hiding-place. Some men have had to take the little fellow home with them and sit steadily watching him for so long as a day and a night before they extracted from him the coveted information, but it was worth it all, for such men never afterwards knew poverty.

Some of the fortunate ones take their neighbors into the secret of their good fortune on such occasions and share their joy with all; other narrow-minded ones endeavor to keep the secret to themselves. But generally it will out, for when a poor man is suddenly found to have acquired a fortune his neighbors know that he must have caught a Leipreachaun.

The great body of the fairy host has no calling and no care; as before hinted at, their life is a glad one; piping, fiddling, and dancing while away the hours for them—or careering on steeds that outspeed the wind.

They are passionately fond of romantic places; there they have their homes and there they have their playgrounds. By the bright moonlight in particular they love to disport themselves on these charming spots, and they deeply resent it should any one interfere with their playgrounds. Their rights, however, are always respected, and no man will dig or plough or build on their well-known haunts. A few foolhardy ones have in times past tried it, but they suffered;

their cattle died, their crops failed, their hay rotted, and they themselves met with mysterious deaths. Inadvertently from time to time the erection of a cabin has been attempted upon a Gentle Place; but the walls of the cabin could never be raised above a certain height, and at length he who had tried to raise it saw the wisdom of carrying away from it all the stones he had brought there, and building elsewhere. Those who show their thoughtfulness in such ways usually prosper afterwards—as do all who earn the fairies' good wishes.

The fairies like not modern ways, with the advantages of so-called civilization. When, some years ago, the first railway penetrated our hills, the fairies of Glendun were, before dawn on a harvest morning, seen (by a man who had come out early to look after his sheep) taking their sorrowful departure from the invaded glen, and carrying away with them as mementos, each a leaf or twig or shamrock. Before "civilization," before materialism and scepticism, they ever keep falling back. This is why the fairies are not now nearly so widespread as they were in ages gone by, and it is why they are now to be found only among the remote hills, where the people are still simple of heart and pure of soul and inspired with faith and with spiritual vision. It is among people of simple faith that the fairies dwell and flourish. May the former never dwindle and the latter never fade.



THE ONE ROAD.

BY MARIE VAN VORST

A WOOD road, and a good road,
 And a road by sand and sea:
 A high-road, and a by-road,
 And a road by plain and lea:
 A fair road, and a bare road,
 And a road by vale and hill:
 A deep road, and a steep road,
 And a foot road sweet and still:
 A town road, and a down road,
 And the king's road broad and free—
 There's but one road in all the world
 The way that leads to thee!

LUNCHING MISS MARY BURTON

By Carolyn Wells

"HELLO, infants!" informally observed Dick Hamilton as two girls came running up the club-house steps.

"Oh, but we're mad at you!" exclaimed the girl in blue; and the girl in white echoed: "Yes, indeed we *are* mad at you!"

"Now, why?" drawled Mr. Hamilton, with a tantalizing smile.

"Because you won't let us dance in the minuet at the Harvest Ball."

"But look here, babes, I can't help it. That minuet is to be danced by our oldest and most respected inhabitants."

"Pooh!" said Alice Carey. "Those girls you picked out for your silly old dance aren't but a few years older than we are. We're *out*. We came out last winter, and you know it."

"Yes," chimed in Ethel Lyons; "and after a girl's in society, it doesn't matter how old or how young she is."

"No," agreed Dick Hamilton amiably.

"And I think you might treat us as if we were grown up. We wear long dresses now, and we have our hair Marcel-waved—at least, I have once, and Alice has twice."

"I'm glad you told me of that," said Mr. Hamilton, with apparent seriousness. "Of course that makes a great difference. A young woman who wears Marcells is unquestionably entitled to grave reverence and respect. Hereafter I shall approach you with awe and deference, although I regret to say it's too late to arrange for you to dance in the minuet."

"You don't fool us," said Alice Carey, tiptilting her little nose scornfully, "with your highfalutin' foolishness. We know you think we're nothing but school-girls, and you're just making fun of us. But we'll get even with you yet. Just you wait!"

"I tremble in my shoes!" declared Mr. Hamilton, with a shudder. "But I say, chickadees, I'm in the dickens of a mess; I wonder if you can't help me out."

"What's it about?" asked Ethel, somewhat mollified at being thus appealed to.

"Why, you see, it's this way. Bob Reynolds's cousin is expected to-day. She's coming at one o'clock, and Bob had arranged to have her lunch with him here at the club. Well, he had a telegram this morning, and had to fly off to New York on some important business or other, and won't be home till dinner time. He asked me to lunch the lady, as he couldn't get word to her not to come. I'm delighted to oblige Bob, and enchanted at the prospect of entertaining a charming young woman, and I've asked Mrs. Manchester to chaperon us. But I've an engagement right after luncheon, and Mrs. Manchester has a bridge party on for this afternoon, which she wouldn't give up for the empress of China. So I don't know exactly what to do with Bob's cousin for the afternoon; and I thought perhaps you children—I beg your pardon, I mean you two august and imposing young ladies—might entertain her with a game of tennis or something."

"Who is she, and what is she like?" demanded Alice.

"Haven't the slightest idea. She's Bob's cousin, and she's coming at one o'clock, and her name's Mary Burton; that's all I know about her."

"Of course, we'll be glad to do anything we can to accommodate you or Mr. Reynolds," said Ethel, with what she flattered herself was a careless, grown-up air, and, having promised, the two girls walked away down the road.

Ampersand Park was an exclusive little settlement nestled in a picturesque niche of the Adirondack region. The club-house and cottages of the Ampersand Club were of the most approved, up-to-date types, and the members of the club jealously guarded their membership list.

The population, therefore, was about the same from year to year, varying mainly as the children of the cottagers grew up to become themselves component parts of Ampersand society.

And as this was the first summer that Alice Carey and Ethel Lyons were full-fledged débutantes, the girls resented any non-recognition of their new importance.

As they walked through the park, along the well-kept mountain road, past the picturesque cottages, they discussed the subject of Mary Burton and her afternoon's entertainment.

"We can make it a little party," said Alice, "for Lou Tracey and Eleanor Gates are coming this morning. But truly, Ethel, I just hate to do anything for Dick Hamilton, after he kept us out of the minuet. I'd like to play a practical joke on him to get even. He's a great joker himself, but he wouldn't like to have the tables turned. I'm just ready to do it, though, if I could think of a good trick."

Dick Hamilton was of the type which is almost always found in any summer settlement. A bachelor, easy going and good natured, very rich and not very young, he was leader in all the Ampersand gaieties. It was to him that Bob Reynolds naturally turned when he found himself unable to meet Miss Burton. And Dick had willingly agreed to accommodate his friend. So Bob had gone away with a feeling of comfortable satisfaction, for Dick Hamilton was not only a charming host, but would look after all the details of the occasion with absolute correctness and good taste.

Notwithstanding the indignation felt by Alice and Ethel at being treated as children, they soon proved that they lacked the dignity and judgment belonging to recognized members of the best society. They put their heads together and concocted a plan. This was brilliant of conception, daring in its execution, and, it seemed to the two girls, exquisitely humorous and an immense joke on Dick Hamilton.

Together they perfected their scheme in every detail, and then awaited the arrival of the guests who were coming at eleven, and who were to be important accessories.

When, therefore, Miss Tracey and Miss Gates arrived at the Carey cottage, they were pounced upon by two excited plotters, who immediately poured forth in torrents of enthusiasm the wonderful scheme they had arranged.

Lou Tracey was a golden-haired madcap, who had been born a coquette and had ever since been improving her talent.

Eleanor Gates was a demure little person with pathetic violet eyes and a helpless manner, that appealed to everybody with whom she came in contact.

"We couldn't have two better characters!" exclaimed Alice, as she looked at her guests with complacent satisfaction. "Now, are you sure you understand?"

"Sure," said Lou, who was fairly bubbling over with mischievous delight.

"Then go ahead," said Alice, "for it's nearly twelve o'clock."

Attired as she had come from the train, in a dainty linen costume, protected by a pongee dust-coat, pretty Lou Tracey left the Carey cottage alone, and started for the club-house.

When she reached there she took a seat on the veranda, and asked an attendant to send Mr. Hamilton to her.

Dick soon appeared, his usual debonair manner tinged with a trifle of embarrassment.

As he approached, his visitor rose and, with a pretty, half shy gesture, put out her hand.

"I am Mary Burton," she said, "and my cousin, Mr. Reynolds said that you were to be burdened with me for the afternoon."

"Oh, no, not at all," stammered Dick, so bewildered by the vision of loveliness, and the unexpected situation, that he scarcely knew what he was saying.

The girl dimpled and smiled. She had distracting blue eyes, and enchanting curls of golden hair that clustered beneath her hat brim. But it was her smile that was the undoing of Dick Hamilton.

"I'm a little early," she went on, and her dimpled face assumed an apologetic expression, "but I couldn't help it, and you don't mind, do you?"

"No, of course I don't mind," said Dick recklessly; "only—you see, I had invited Mrs. Manchester to lunch with us, and—and she hasn't yet arrived."

"Oh dear!" cried his vivacious guest, and Dick suddenly decided that her rosy-lipped pout was even more adorable than her smile; "and I am so fearfully hungry! I've traveled miles and miles! Couldn't we just have a tiny bite of something before the chaperon lady comes?"

"Of course we can," said Dick gaily. "The roof of the Ampersand club-house is sufficient chaperon for anybody. May I take you at once to the dining-room?"

"Yes, indeed," replied his famished guest, and in a few moments they were comfortably seated at a table in the pleasant club dining-room. It was one of the most desirable tables, by a window which opened on a wide veranda overlooking a glorious mountain view.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed the visitor, as she looked across the landscape. "I think Ampersand is too charming for anything. Wasn't it a pity Bob had to go away to-day?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Dick. "I'm jolly well satisfied as it is. Shall we have a bit of clear soup, Miss Burton, and then some brook trout, and then——"

"Oh, how lovely! I had thought of only a sandwich, but the mere mention of brook trout reminds me of my mountain appetite. When do you think Bob will return?"

"Oh, not until six or seven o'clock at the earliest. Mayn't I plan your afternoon for you, Miss Burton? Won't you give me this half-day for all my very own?"

A suppressed but very distinct giggle was heard outside, and, looking up quickly, Dick saw Alice and Ethel walking arm in arm along the veranda.

For some unaccountable reason, his guest flushed scarlet at the sight of the two girls passing the window, and Mr. Hamilton said hastily, "Those two madcap children who are just passing want you

to play tennis with them this afternoon, but I'm not going to allow it. Reynolds put you in my care, and I feel it my duty not to let you out of my sight until his return."

"I'm sure, Mr. Hamilton, your plans will be more interesting than those of a couple of school-girls." The speaker said this with a dimpled smile, and a glance of such interest in her host that he rushed madly on.

"We'll go for a drive," he said, "and come back by the lake. It's a long drive, but you don't feel tired after your morning journey, do you?"

"No, not a bit; but isn't it all rather informal?"

"Oh, that will be all right," said Dick easily; "I expect Mrs. Manchester at one o'clock, you know, and then we'll give her a bite of luncheon, and she'll carry you off to her cottage. Then you'll be her guest, and of course I can come round and take you for a little drive."

"Of course," said the siren opposite; "and I think your plans are delightful."

At that moment a waiter approached the pair and told Mr. Hamilton that a lady in the parlor wished to see him.

"But I'm engaged," said Dick Hamilton, with a slight frown. "Where is her card?"

"She gave me none, sir; she merely told me to tell you she wished to see you at once."

"Then ask for her name;" and, owing to his annoyance at the interruption, Dick spoke almost roughly.

"Oh, don't be so cross," said his luncheon guest, who was smiling at him. "Please go, Mr. Hamilton, and see who it is."

Unable to disobey the command of the enchantress, Dick rose and left the dining-room.

Awaiting him in the parlor was a slender girl with pathetic violet eyes and a sweet, wistful face.

As Dick entered she raised her long lashes and said softly:

"I'm Mary Burton, and my cousin Bob isn't here; and he said that if I'd ask for Mr. Hamilton——"

Dick looked at her sternly. Was she playing a trick on him, or what?

At his unsympathetic expression and his very apparent lack of welcome, the girl looked at him helplessly. The tears gathered in her violet eyes and her little hands trembled as she said, "I—I wish Bob was here."

That was enough for Dick. A woman's tears, more especially a pretty woman's tears, were more than he could stand.

He went near her and took her hand gently. "It's all right,"

he said; "you must pardon my momentary embarrassment. You are really Mary Burton?"

His look as he said this was so frank and kind that the tears went away as if by magic, and the sweet, pale face smiled.

"Oh, I see," she said; "you want credentials."

"No, no," said Dick hurriedly; "not that, not that. Only, you see——"

"Yes, of course," murmured the girl, "and, stupidly enough, I haven't a card, but—look, here's a letter I received this morning."

Opening her dainty wrist-bag, she took from it a letter which was plainly addressed to Miss Mary Burton.

Nonplussed, but no longer doubting the identity of this second guest, Dick chanced to glance toward the hall, and there saw his lady of the luncheon table, smiling and beckoning to him. Excusing himself to Miss Burton, he went out and faced the mischievous beauty.

"What does it mean?" he began.

"Hush!" said the other, laying a finger on her lip. "It's all right now. I'm an impostor, a naughty, wicked impostor. Don't ask why, or anything. Perhaps it was because I wanted to meet you—perhaps it wasn't. However, you must forget the episode, and never think of it again. Now run back to your real Mary Burton, and see that she is properly chaperoned."

The dancing eyes smiled into his, the bewitching, roguish face dimpled adorably, and with a saucy nod of farewell the mysterious guest walked quickly out of the door and down the steps away from the club-house.

Pinching himself to be sure he wasn't dreaming, Hamilton turned away and reentered the parlor.

"Miss Burton," he said, in his polite, manly way, "I beg you will pardon my seeming rudeness. An astonishing episode has just occurred. I will tell you all about it some other time, but now I'm going to devote myself to your reception and comfort. I am expecting a friend very soon, who will chaperon our luncheon, and, meantime, will you not sit here and rest? Or perhaps on the veranda, where there is a delightful view."

"Yes, let us go on the veranda," said the new-comer, whose vivacity seemed to be restored by the graciousness of her host's manner.

As they strolled along the veranda, past the dining-room windows, the violet eyes were again raised to his, and a soft voice said, "I hate to confess it, but, truly, I'm hungry. I was traveling, and I could get no breakfast."

"You poor child!" cried Dick, again helpless before the pathos

of those pleading eyes. "We'll begin luncheon at once. I'll order for three, and Mrs. Manchester will join us soon."

And so it came about that again Dick Hamilton entered the dining-room with a young lady.

"You like brook trout?" he said, glancing at his demure guest. He asked the question largely from a desire to see again those violet eyes which she kept so persistently cast down.

"Yes," she said, looking up at him with delighted interest; "brook trout and then crabs à la Newburg."

Dick was in despair, but he broke it to her gently.

"Do you know," he said, "there aren't any crabs in the mountain brooks at all this season. It seems to be their off-year. Will you try a *filet*?"

"Yes," she said, and her mournful glance was so thrilling that Dick was glad that the crabs had failed after all.

The two got on famously. By the time they reached the salad they were chatting like old friends. The guest still seemed shy, and her diffident glances were so appealing that Dick devoted himself to the task of making her feel at ease.

"I wish Mrs. Manchester would come," she said more than once, "for it doesn't seem quite right for me to be here with you this way. Although," she added, with her eyes cast down, "it's very delightful."

Again Dick plunged. He invited her, after she should be properly under Mrs. Manchester's care, to go driving with him, or walking.

But she declined his invitations with a glance of startled reproach.

Shortly before one o'clock Mrs. Manchester arrived. She was a correct and dignified matron, one of the charter members of the Ampersand Club. She joined the party at the table, and immediately approved of Mr. Hamilton's guest.

Although Dick regretted the spoiling of his tête-à-tête, he was glad for the sake of Miss Burton's preferences that the elder lady had come.

They had reached the last course, and were sipping their coffee, when a tall young woman walked into the dining-room. She came directly to Mr. Hamilton's table and paused there. She was rather stately, and yet had a breezy air, which betokened a nature afraid of nothing. Her appearance, her dress, and her gait gave an impression of unconventionality and strong will power.

"Are you Dick Hamilton?" she said, as she offered him her hand. "I'm Mary Burton, Rob Reynolds's cousin. I expected to meet him here to-day, but I had a telegram saying that he was called away, and that you would look after me till he came back. They told me at the office that you were lunching with friends, so I said I'd join

you here. I see you've finished luncheon, but I hope you'll order something for me. I'm simply starving."

Dick Hamilton rose mechanically. This procession of starving young women was becoming appalling. It dawned on him suddenly that he was the victim of some sort of a practical joke.

He glanced at the others. Mrs. Manchester was staring at the newcomer through her lorgnon with an expression of haughty surprise and disapproval. Dick turned to his younger guest, but the violet eyes were cast down, and Dick could scarcely tell whether the trembling lips denoted amusement or distress.

But the young man's anger was aroused. If a joke was being played on him, this third young woman was no more likely to be Mary Burton than the other two, and he decided to take his chances in favor of Violet Eyes.

"Excuse me," he said politely but coldly, "but, for certain reasons, I must ask you for proof that you are Miss Burton."

The lady did not seem at all annoyed. "Oh, I'm Mary Burton all right," she said, "although I didn't bring any sworn affidavit to that effect. And, since you put it that way, I think I ought to ask for proofs of your own identity; for Bob told me that I should find Mr. Hamilton a courteous and hospitable man." She gave him a look of reproach which made Dick Hamilton turn very red. Never before had his manners been impugned. He accepted the situation without further delay. If a hundred young women should follow, each calling herself Mary Burton, it was his not to question why, but to play the part of Bob's friend to each.

And so he said, with a grave cordiality in his manner: "You have given me a deserved rebuke, Miss Burton, and I humbly apologize for my rudeness. Mrs. Manchester, may I present to you Miss Burton, and——"

But as he turned to present his new guest to her namesake, he was forced to pause, for the namesake was speaking.

As she rose from her chair the violet-eyed girl said gracefully: "You must pardon my abruptness, but I beg that you will all excuse me. I have an important engagement, which I must keep promptly, and it is later than I thought." With more dignity than Dick had supposed the slight young girl capable of, she made a bow that included them all, and swiftly but gracefully crossed the dining-room.

With a muttered word of apology, Dick strode after her, and joined her as she reached the door-way.

"Not a word!" she said, as she turned her violet eyes once more upon him. "Not a word! I am not Mary Burton, but *neither is she!*"

Without a further word, she glided out of sight, and Dick returned to the table. The situation there was, to say the least, difficult.

Mrs. Manchester, it was plain to be seen, was not only astounded, but offended, at the inexplicable proceedings.

Mary Burton, who of course had no knowledge of her previous pretenders, came to the conclusion that Bob's friends were surly and ill-natured people; but, being a matter-of-fact young woman, she did not allow her eccentric reception to affect her appetite, and when Dick, determined to do his duty if it took the whole afternoon, ordered a third luncheon which began with brook trout, Miss Burton calmly proceeded to do full justice to it.

When the uninteresting meal was finished, and no further Mary Burtons appeared on the scene, Dick breathed more freely. He had a dim suspicion that the whole performance was the work of Alice and Ethel, and as he had come to suspect that the present Mary Burton was, after all, Bob's cousin, he quickly laid his plans as to what to do next.

And so when Mrs. Manchester took her departure, after making her farewells rather stiffly, he turned to Miss Burton with more animation than he had yet shown.

"I hope," he said, "that you're fond of tennis, for two young ladies are anxious to have you play with them this afternoon."

"I love it!" exclaimed Mary Burton enthusiastically. "I play for hours and never get tired."

Dick chuckled to himself. He would get his revenge.

As the two went out on the wide veranda, Mr. Hamilton was not surprised to see in a distant corner a group of girls who were giving way to shrieks and howls of merriment.

Straight toward the group Dick led Miss Burton. The laughing quartet instantly became quiet and resolved itself into a very demure Alice and Ethel and the first and second Misses Burton.

"Miss Burton," said Dick to the athletic girl at his side, "I want to present to you my two very dear young friends, Alice Carey and Ethel Lyons. They want you to play tennis with them this afternoon, and will be rejoiced to find what an enthusiastic player you are."

The girls had perforce risen when introduced to Miss Burton, and could do nothing else but greet her cordially and appear delighted at the prospect mapped out for them.

Mary Burton met them half way.

"You dear girls!" she cried. "I feel as if I already knew you, for Bob has told me so much about you. Come on, let us go and play at once; I'm crazy for a game. Or, if it's too soon after luncheon to play, let us stroll around the mountain first. Mr. Hamilton tells me you are to be my hostesses for the whole afternoon, and I assure you I'm delighted."

"Run along, infants," said Mr. Hamilton, with a triumphant smile at Alice and Ethel; "don't let us keep you from your walk and your tennis. These two young ladies you may leave behind, for they have promised to drive with me this afternoon, and we will pick up Mrs. Manchester to make a fourth."

And so it came about that when the gay brake with its merry quartet started for an afternoon drive, they passed the tennis players working hard at their game; and when toward evening they returned they found the indefatigable Mary Burton still keeping the others at it.



THE TREE OF THE CROSS

BY SUSIE M. BEST

THE Golden Star looked down and smiled
Upon the Virgin and her Child;
It spread its splendors like a crown
Upon the roofs of Bethlehem town.

*(Oh, little tree! Oh, little tree!
Why seemest thou in agony?)*

The shepherds, bidding with their sheep,
Harkened, as men in happy sleep,
To strains celestial, while their eyes
Saw choiring hosts of Paradise.

*(Oh, little tree! Oh, little tree!
Dost thou behold a Cross to be?)*

The hornèd oxen, mute with awe,
Peeped them from out their stalls and saw
The wise men lay at Jesus' feet
Their unctuous oils and spices sweet.

*(Oh, little tree! Oh, little tree!
Does some one whisper "Calvary"?)*

The world that night won its release
From death through Him, the Prince of Peace,
Who in the manger lay at rest
Upon his happy mother's breast.

*(Oh, little tree! Oh, little tree!
Seems it that One is nailed on thee?)*

QUEEN COPHETUA

By Constance Smedley

"INSTEAD of useful guides to life, I consider novels nothing less than criminally misleading," said Ann, with emphasis.

"What is the matter now?" I asked tolerantly.

"You know the rich heroine who suddenly appears in the poor hero's lonely rooms and offers to pool her lot with his?" demanded Ann.

I admitted the situation seemed familiar.

"Well, I've done it, and I can safely say it doesn't work," said Ann viciously.

I lay back, gasping.

"I met him at Mrs. Bunkirk-Brown's," broke out Ann, who was in that agitated state which makes confidence a necessity. "He was an East-End Oxford curate, and he sat by me at lunch. We talked. I was most sympathetic, and I could not help seeing he was very struck. I had on that pale blue hat. You remember?" Ann looked down pensively.

"Very becoming," I murmured.

Ann sighed.

"I know. When we met next week at the Bishop's garden party, we felt quite like friends. He told me all about himself. He lives in one room, in the most deadly slums, and spends his whole time working for his flock, and only comes up into the West to get money for them. A wonderful life! And Lady Marshfield told me after it was quite true; he lives on one hundred pounds a year, and gives more than half of it away. In fact, sometimes he starves. She asked me to lunch a few days after, and when he came into the room it seemed like fate. We had the most wonderful talk!"

Ann stopped, her hands clasped, her eyes shining.

"Nothing can spoil that," she said softly. "When he left he held my hand for ages, and just looked. Then he said in a sort of whisper: 'It ought to be good-by, and it must be; but think of me sometimes, though I've no right to ask even that.'"

"At the third meeting!" I remarked, a little sourly. "I should think not."

"You hadn't heard the talk," returned Ann dreamily. "Oh, that was all right. I was in my sable coat. Have you seen it yet?"

I begged her pardon humbly.

"it doesn't matter," answered Ann. "Now the awful part is coming. I thought and thought of him all night, so poor, so lonely, and me with everything I wanted. Somehow, I knew his good-by was final and he would never see me again. You know how things get on my emotions! And then everything that I had read came back to me, and I remembered there was one course open to a girl who was well-off and beautiful—or linearly attractive. She could sacrifice her pride on the altar of her love!"

"But, my dear Ann," I began, "in this case the man hadn't——"

"Please don't," said Ann. "I want to tell you everything, and it's difficult enough as it is. All the nicest heroines go to the man's rooms, you know they do, and the man loves them for their innocence. So I got into a hansom and drove for a hundred miles to Spitalfields. I found his place in a dreadful lodging house, dismissed the cabman, who was so horribly expensive I dared not keep him waiting, and went up millions of stairs. Then I came to his name on a door."

Ann paused tragically.

"It was not till that moment I began to have an awful doubt. He lived in *one* room, it was nearly ten o'clock at night (we'd taken such hours and hours to come). Supposing——"

"Ann!" I gasped.

"Well, I knocked," said Ann quickly. "His voice said, 'Come in!' It sounded 'up.' I opened the door, and oh, my dear! There he was in the most funny baggy suit of gray flannelette, cooking a horribly-smelling dish on a little stove—something white and twisty. I believe they call it tripe. The smell! He hadn't a collar on, and he wasn't even shaved. I simply stood there, and everything went giddy."

"Oh, Ann, how awful!" I said faintly.

"Oh, that was nothing," replied Ann, with untold tragedy. "He went the most dreadful red. 'What on earth is it?' he said. Now, I put it to you, could I have offered him myself? Could I?"

Being possessed of a quick imagination, I was fanning myself with my handkerchief.

"So I said, 'I've come to consult you about a Convalescent home I want to start,'" said Ann, looking somewhat silly. "It sounded more foolish than I could possibly tell you."

I murmured a complete agreement.

"He said, 'Will you wait outside one moment,' and he *shut the door*." Again Ann paused for due effect.

"After what seemed like hours, he opened it in an ordinary black suit, with all signs of cooking gone except the smell, and a screen in front of the stove. Then he said, 'Come in,' and I said, 'No, thank you; I'm afraid it's a little late!' And he said, 'It is, rather,' in the

horriddest voice. My dear, I simply bolted, and it was not until I got to the bottom I remembered I'd sent the cab away. You see, I'd thought we should be hours, me arguing against his pride, and him longing to accept, yet his manhood holding him back till love conquered, when he would take me home, walking through the rain in love's dream which even glorified the dingy omnibus. Oh, *you* know," said Ann, with an exasperated shriek; "you've read it a hundred times."

"What did happen?" said I.

"The most awful thing that could have happened," Ann replied, with real conviction. "He followed me down, and said, 'How are you to get home?' And I said, 'A cab, please.' And he said, 'There are no cabs here;' and we had to get on a hideous tram, and ride for miles in the most agonizing propinquity while I had to make up about a Convalescent home." Ann leaned back mutely. "Then we got out," she murmured, "and he put me into a cab, and the cabman was odious, and I sat there while they bargained."

Ann shuddered. "Then Mr. Derwent came to the side, and said, 'He is paid,' and took off his hat, and that is the end of the story. It was ten shillings, and he's starving."

"How supremely awful!" I ejaculated.

"Listen," said Ann, leaning forward. "A man could never be pleased for a rich girl to come down and catch him unshaved, in a bed-sitting-room, cooking tripe. And he could never accept her, never, if she showed she pitied him, as she would show by coming. It doesn't work."

"I'm thinking of that ten shillings," I murmured.

"It was very difficult," said Ann. "I couldn't send it back after he knew I'd seen he couldn't afford it. However, I've managed that all right."

Ann spoke with some relief.

"How?" said I.

"Anonymously," answered Ann, with a slightly happier expression; "a curt note, enclosing a check for twenty pounds for his poor."

"An anonymous check?" asked I.

Ann paled suddenly.

"I am the greatest fool in the world," said she.

I agreed with her implicitly.

When a man allows his purse to choose his friends he must not be grieved to find them more responsive to his pocket than to his heart.

THE LOBBYIST IN THE NICHE

By Lawrence S. Mott

"PS-ST!"

The young Senator stopped and listened. He was walking down the corridor of the State House when he heard the peculiar sound.

"Ps-st!"

There it was again, and right close at hand, too. It sounded very much like the low hissing of a rattlesnake, preparatory to its springing at its victim.

"Ps-st!"

This time the sound was louder and emphatic. It appeared to be right at the listener's elbow. Senator Rushback began to peer around. Perhaps the call, or whatever it was, had not been intended for him, but his curiosity was aroused. It was odd that in the lighted corridor, with dozens of people constantly passing, the source of the sound could not be promptly traced. He saw nothing ahead, and concluded to turn abruptly around. As he started to turn, he observed that just at his right side was a niche of some size that had been built in the wall. Though it was light in the corridor, it was comparatively dark in the niche. The first glance, however, satisfied him that there was a figure in the wall. Before he could look a second time, he heard again:

"Ps-st!"

It was lower and more seductive this time. Rushback moved nearer to the niche, and then perceived a hand extended from the recess. Still another glance revealed the clearer outlines of a rather robust man, although the man kept so well in the niche that a description was not as yet possible. The extended hand had in the mean time grasped that of the Senator. The serpent-like hiss was exchanged for rich, mellow tones that were very attractive.

"Glad to meet you, Senator," said the voice. "Pardon the rather novel nature of the introduction. Have to do it this way. Will explain later. My room is No. 21, Traymore Tavern. Will be there in half an hour. Come around then. Want to make your acquaintance. Think you may not regret it."

Rushback for the moment was startled. There was something uncanny about the affair. There was no doubt about the lighted

corridor in which he stood. There was also no doubt about the gloomy recess in the wall. There was likewise no doubt whatever that the occupant of the gloomy recess had a wonderfully charming voice. The crisp character of the words and the brevity of the sentences added to the charm. He might as well reply, apparition or no apparition.

"I must admit your introduction is a little out of the ordinary," said the Senator. "Of course I do not know you, but that isn't your fault, I presume. I am such a stranger, that you might be the Governor, for all I know to the contrary. Probably there is no good reason why I should not go to your room later, but, really, I should like to know your name before calling on you."

The figure never moved an inch from the niche, but, from looking steadily in that direction, the Senator's sight had become accustomed to the dimness. He saw that the man addressing him had a face that compelled scrutiny, if not admiration. It was smooth shaven, except for a slight gray mustache. The hair was also gray, but sparse, although the head was not exactly bald. It took several keen looks to notice that the face was marred in one respect: one eye was natural; the other was artificial. Rushback judged it was a glass optic, occupying the place of one that the misfortunes of birth or disaster or illness had removed. The substitute was not so unpleasant, however. You really overlooked the defect when you took in the wondrous brightness and keenness of the other. It was an eye such as the novelists rave about and say reads your inmost thoughts. The Senator, who was not analytical, simply knew that the eye, like the voice, penetrated his very being and held him captive. Extending his glance a little further, he saw that the occupant of the niche was exceedingly well dressed, and wore a waistcoat of many hues, beneath which was a watch-fob containing two stones whose brilliancy was enhanced by the outside light that flashed upon them. He judged from his casual observation that the man was about sixty years old. He might be older, for he was decidedly well preserved.

"Can't tell you my name now," was the response of the niche man. "Tell you that by-and-by, over a glass of fizz and a fat cigar. Can identify myself by saying I am a great friend of your uncle, Silas Hornblower, who was Senator from your county so many years. You are wearing his mantle, I suppose. Trot along now. I can't leave this dungeon just yet. Have to hiss another fellow over. Better for you we are strangers just yet. Don't forget. Half an hour from now. Traymore Tavern, room 21."

Rushback was more than puzzled. He was rather rattled. After moving along the corridor awhile, he came to, so to speak. All this

business was new, anyhow. He had never been far from home, and his home was in the country. His family had always been one of the best in the neighborhood, and it had prospered, according to the rural estimate. "Sam," as everybody called him, had the regular public school education, and then attended the Blairville Academy, ten miles distant. He could have gone to college, but he didn't care to. His uncle Silas, whom the mystery of the niche seemed to know, disapproved of a college training, and what Uncle Silas said "went" in his family. His uncle wanted Samuel to study law in his office, and that was the programme. At the age of twenty-one he got his sheepskin and became a member of the firm of Hornblower & Rushback.

His uncle devoted more time to politics than he did to law. He spent nine years in the legislature—three in the House and six in the Senate. He was the party boss of the county. He was likewise hand in glove with the big corporations, particularly the railroads. At the age of sixty he had plenty of money and knew where to get more. He was president of one bank, and a director in two more. He was also a director in the Interstate Railroad, and had been from the start. He helped get its charter, procured most of the rights of way for it across his end of the State, and before the stock got its start on the Stock Exchange he bought a cartload of the scrip.

He was sixty-one when his second term expired. He had sized things up pretty well and concluded there was danger ahead. His party had been a little too thick with the trusts, and the people were beginning to kick. Personally, he had milked the cow about dry for the present, and the voters near home were becoming suspicious. To be reelected would cost a pile of money. The boys, so he heard, were saying he was "hogging everything but the grunts," and they meant to have a good slice of the ham if Uncle Silas ran again. He would announce he was through with politics and wanted to enjoy the rest of his life quietly with his folks and neighbors. He did not intend to lose his grip, however. He had promised the Interstate Railroad Company that he would look after them as usual.

He thought it all out, made his announcement in a clever letter in the newspapers, which pleased the people immensely, and said he should like to suggest the nomination of his nephew, Samuel Rushback, whom everybody knew and 'most every one liked. As chairman of the County Committee, it was easy to carry out his scheme. He had a harder time to get Sam to consent to run than he did to make him the candidate. The young man, just thirty and therefore just qualified for Senator, was a regular home body. He was fond of his practice, did not care for politics or politicians, and he had a sweetheart who was by all odds the prettiest and smartest

girl in the county. Then, his mother was afraid of the temptations she understood existed at the capital.

But Silas Hornblower would not brook interference. He induced all the family, except the mother, to urge the new career, and lastly he somehow won over the sweetheart until she became the strongest champion of the scheme. The young man was elected, although his uncle was rather disappointed over the small majority. Sam refused to go to the capital before the day the session opened, and Hornblower, catching the trend of his mind, said there was no need of it. Silas knew better, but he wanted no trouble in advance. He adopted another plan. He wrote the following letter, a week in advance of the session, to Christopher Denman, care of the Interstate Railroad Company, Boston, Massachusetts:

DEAR CHRIS:

You know my nephew, Samuel Rushback, has been elected to the Senate as my successor. He is in need of the kind of knowledge you can impart. He won't show up until the opening night. Get hold of him. Hiss him over to your confounded old niche, get him to your room, and then do the rest. I am simply pressing the button. As ever,

SILAS HORNBLOWER.

Rushback did not like to expose his ignorance, and yet he did not care to go to a stranger's room without knowing his name. The fact that the man knew his uncle Silas, or said he did, rather reconciled him to the situation. But he decided to ask a question or two if he ran across the proper person. Just as he reached the door of the State House leading into the street, he encountered a tall, gaunt individual with a long grayish beard and the most powerful voice he had ever heard. The man was addressing another, and he heard his companion call the tall man "Fog Horn." The appropriate character of the name did not occur to him then. The "Fog Horn" bowed to Rushback. The latter returned the bow, and then, stopping, concluded to see if his new acquaintance could help him out.

"Pardon me," said the Senator, "but I am one of the new members, and practically a stranger here. I was just stopped by a man who stood back there in a hole in the wall. Can you tell me his name?"

There was a tremendous guffaw from the man with the powerful voice, before he replied:

"So the old rooster has been after you already, eh? Well, he must need you. He hissed you over to his niche, didn't he? Thought so. Well, young man, that's the famous Christopher Denman, the ablest lobbyist that ever came down the pike. He represents about

all the railroads that operate in this State, but he is the special agent of the Interstate road. He is very peculiar, but as smart as God ever made a man. He never goes into the Senate or House, but he just makes a sort of office of that niche in the corridor wall. When he wants to make an appointment, he crawls into the hole, where it is hard to see him, and gives a hissing call to his victim. He is one of the best fellows socially there is, but he is always up to some game. Better watch him pretty close for awhile. By the way, what may your name be?"

Samuel told him, and likewise what county he was going to represent.

"Ho, ho!" shouted the older man. "So you are Silas Hornblower's nephew, eh? Well, that probably accounts for Denman's interest in you. Your uncle and Christopher were bosom friends. Excuse me, but those two devils put up more jobs and carried them through than any couple that ever trod these corridors. It's a wonder your uncle never spoke to you about Chris."

The men shook hands and separated. As Rushback walked slowly down to the hotel, he said to himself: "So the man in the wall is one of Uncle Silas's old chums. People have always said uncle was foxy, and I guess they were right. He never told me anything about Denman or any of the rest of his friends down here. And Chris, as they seem to call him, is a lobbyist, and a big one. I don't like that. I have always supposed a lobbyist was a very bad man who bribed members of the legislature to vote a certain way. Well, Uncle Silas insisted on my coming here, but he can't make me do wrong. I will call on this lobbyist, because I about promised to, but if he is up to any game with me, he won't succeed."

When the Senator reached Denman's rooms, the host was there. He had three large rooms, and they were brilliantly lighted. He appeared to be keeping open house, for there were a score of men, some of whom Rushback recognized as colleagues in the Senate—at least, they had occupied desks at the short session held earlier in the evening. There was a table loaded with creamed oysters, lobster salad, and other delicacies, and waiters were opening champagne and passing around glasses among the crowd.

The lobbyist saw the young man instantly. He cocked his natural eye in the Senator's direction, shook hands, and, in those tones that sounded as the velvet paw of a panther is said to feel, remarked:

"Gentlemen, this is Rushback, the new Senator from Denton County. Successor to Hornblower. You all remember Silas. Don't look like a chip of the old block, but I guess he will develop. Make yourself at home, Senator. We're going to talk business pretty soon."

As he mentioned business, Christopher gave a furtive glance at Rushback. The latter returned the glance, but it was one of surprise and perplexity. Every once in a while the veteran would steal a look at the young man; he seemed to be sizing him up.

Suddenly Denman walked over to the corner of the room and stood there. Maybe he was so used to the niche in the corridor that he sought a similar position wherever he might be. At any rate, there was where he posted himself before talking.

"Just stop the feed and fizz for a moment, boys. Got something to say. Then you can resume the pleasant occupation."

In a clear, rich voice, he proceeded to tell how the Interstate Railroad wanted an additional line of road in the upper end of the commonwealth. While the rights of way had mostly been obtained, it required some legislation to secure the proper kind of a franchise. The case was urgent, and it was necessary a bill should be promptly passed. It would be introduced the next day, and no time must be lost in pushing it along.

While the old man was speaking he kept that wonderful eye of his in constant motion. Each of those present—and they were evidently all members of the legislature—came under its survey. If any one seemed in doubt, Denman would address him individually for a second or two. Before finishing, he increased in rapidity, and his voice deepened and hardened somewhat. He closed by remarking that he expected those present to do their level best.

Then, leaving the corner, he strolled over to where Rushback sat, and half whispered:

"This is a measure your uncle Silas wants. Guess your firm has done work for us. Hope you are satisfied to support it. I will give you a copy of the bill before you leave. Read it over in your room."

The old man was turning away when the Senator spoke up.

"I hope everything is straight about the bill. I don't want to start my course here by endorsing anything that is crooked."

The eye flashed fire. It was only for an instant, however. Then the flash turned into a twinkle, and the velvet voice said:

"Straight? It's as straight as the Interstate track itself. You can always rely on Chris Denman to do the right thing, no matter what they say."

But all the same the lobbyist did not like the young man's attitude. He was afraid there was a streak of independence in his make-up that might prove unpleasant. He recalled how Silas Hornblower had occasional outbursts that were hard to subdue. The nephew might need a few lessons. He had a few nails in his paw for such fellows. He was suavity itself, however, when he said good-night.

"You're a good lawyer, Rushback. If you find any legal flaws in the bill, let me know. We want you to be perfectly satisfied."

Rushback did find some flaws. He sat up half the night reading the bill. He was a pretty fair lawyer, and he soon discovered that, while on its face the measure merely provided for an extension of the existing railroad line, it really authorized the building of conduits for water or electric lights or telegraph-wires alongside the tracks. One section, smuggled cleverly in a long paragraph, permitted the transmission of power of all kinds through the conduits to any point or points reached by the railroad or its branches or sidings.

The territory to be covered by the provisions of the bill embraced the county he lived in and represented in the Senate. He knew the value of such a franchise. There were several millions of dollars that could be taken out in profits each year. His uncle Silas would reap a fortune, and he could profit greatly himself as his uncle's law partner.

But it wasn't a fair nor just measure. It would create another great monopoly to add to the tax-payer's burdens, and would shut off the natural competition that ought to exist. He did not see how he could conscientiously support it, at least in its present shape. He certainly could not favor rushing the bill through without affording ample time for examination and discussion. If that was attempted, he would have to protest.

He did not sleep well, and arose early. After breakfast he went right to the State House. The corridor seemed much more gloomy than it had the night before. Rushback could not but smile as he neared the niche and thought of his experience. His smile was short-lived, however, for just then came that peculiar sound:

"Ps-st!"

The lobbyist must be in the wall already, and it was not nine o'clock.

Was the hiss for him?

Apparently not, for he could see a form standing close to the niche, and he heard whispers. A man he did not know emerged from the semi-darkness and walked away. So did a second and a third. Each man had a package in his hand. As they departed, the call was repeated.

"Ps-st!"

That must be for him. He could not resist the hiss, and walked to the recess.

"Good-morning, Senator," came from Denman. "Glad to see you around bright and early. Did the bill suit you?"

"No, sir; it did not. It will have to be changed before I can favor it."

"Sorry," responded Denman. There was a sardonic curl of the lip. "We will talk it over later. Meanwhile kindly examine the contents of this package. Think you can favor what is inside."

He handed the young man a small bundle that resembled those he had just seen in the hands of the three men. Nodding his head, he proceeded to the Senate Chamber and sat down at his desk. He never thought to observe whether any one was around. He slowly opened the package, and there was a certificate for one hundred shares of stock of the Interstate Railroad Company. It was made out to Christopher Denman and endorsed in blank. The par value was ten thousand dollars, and it was selling at a premium on the Stock Exchange.

Rushback was bewildered. His astonishment was so great he could scarcely move. He put his head on his right hand and gazed vacantly at the document.

He was aroused and startled by a gruff, yet hearty, voice behind him. He jumped from his chair, and, turning, saw the long-whiskered man whom he had heard called "Fog Horn" the night previous, but whose right name he had learned was Randall.

"Well, Senator, you are getting down to business early. That's pretty good for a starter, I should say."

Rushback's face was livid. His rage increased each second. He pounded his desk with his fist, and, in tones so loud and unnatural that he scarcely recognized he was speaking, shouted:

"You don't suppose I would keep the dirty stuff, do you?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Randall. "Most of us would be glad to get it."

The young Senator choked down the angry words that sprang to his lips, slammed shut the lid of his desk, put the certificate in his pocket, and almost ran out of the room. He headed for the niche in the corridor.

It was like the scene before a shrine along a foreign wayside when Rushback got in the neighborhood of the niche. He was horrified at what was happening. It was evident the stock certificates, neatly tied, were being distributed in a lavish manner. It was so bold, too, it seemed to the Senator. He didn't know that boldness was one of Denman's cards. Perhaps no one except the recipients knew, but there must be suspicions afloat.

Yet here was where Rushback and other new arrivals were mistaken. The lobbyist in the wall was as natural as a part of the fixtures of the State House. He had been there, indeed, so many years that his face and voice were familiar to every official, poli-

tician, and man of prominence. Denman never concealed his occupation. He himself said that he was brought up in the old school, which believed that in order to obtain legislation it was necessary to keep trained representatives constantly around the legislature.

"How do you suppose," he was fond of remarking, "railroads, canals, and water-power plants would ever have been built but for the lobbyist? Legislatures wouldn't have granted charters without urging. There wouldn't be a railroad-track across the State if it hadn't been for lobbying. We had to keep up to the times, no matter what it cost, and that's what we have done. It's not a question of morals or scruples. It's a simple question of getting there."

Although Rushback had cooled down some before he could get a chance to speak to Denman alone, he was very angry. The old, seasoned politician perceived the young man's condition at once.

"Now, look here, Senator," he said, in a voice as soothing as oil on ruffled waters, but with eyes flashing, "if you want to lay me out, let's move from here. The niche and corridor are all right for quick, easy business, but not for tempests. Come in the Secretary of State's room. He's got a quiet private office we can occupy. Besides, some people you ought to meet come in there often."

The young man tried to protest. It was no use. Denman led him by the arm through a part of the State House new to him. A moment later he was in a handsome office, seated in a chair, with a cigar in his hand, and the lobbyist was standing in a corner, swinging his hands under his coat-tails and awaiting developments.

"You have insulted me. You have tried to bribe me," shouted the Senator, as he threw the stock on the table. "I will fight that iniquitous bill to the end. I——"

He stopped short. Somebody had slapped him hard on the back. He turned quickly, prepared to defend himself. There stood his uncle Silas.

"Sam, what's the matter with you?" and the uncle's voice was gruff. "I never expected to see you lose your temper this way, and especially in front of an old friend of mine, as Chris Denman is. Sit down and behave yourself."

The nephew was knocked out for the time. There was no doubt of it. After a moment he shook hands with Silas and then dropped back in his chair. The older men watched him and said nothing. Gradually the Senator recovered his equilibrium. Then his speech came back, and he started to talk.

At first he inquired when his uncle had arrived, and how all the family and the sweetheart were. Then he wanted to know why this

visit had taken place. Hornblower's replies were brief and curt. Samuel saw Silas was offended.

By degrees, however, the real thing at stake arose again to the surface. Even his uncle should not shake his resolution, and he told him so. He would not support the bill in its present form anyhow, and, since he had been offered the equivalent of money for his vote, he did not see how he could be mixed up in the affair. He proposed to protest against the measure when it was introduced.

There was a knock on the door. The lobbyist opened it and whispered to some one.

"I will be back pretty soon, Silas," he called out, and then disappeared.

The uncle labored long with the nephew, but he couldn't do much. He told the youth not to make a fool of himself, that their law firm did a great deal of business for the railroad and would doubtless do a great deal more.

It was the stock that the young Senator rebelled about.

"Denman should not have played such a game," he said. "He knows I am not that kind of a man."

"Think you are right, Sam," replied Uncle Silas, "but he did not think of it, probably. I will take the stock"—and he picked it up and put it in his pocket—"and explain to Chris. No use letting some rascal get it. If you have to make some kind of a protest, all right, but go it mild and don't say anything about bribery."

The door opened and a boy handed Hornblower a note. He read it, glanced with a half smile at his nephew, and then said:

"Sam, this is your first day in the Senate, you know. You'd better go over and take your seat, and see me later. I will be here until to-morrow."

The young Senator grabbed his hat and looked at his watch. He had been in the room over an hour. He must have missed all the early proceedings.

He dashed down the corridor. There were some people near the niche yet. Denman must have returned to the wall. He listened.

"Ps-st!"

He was certainly there.

"Ps-st!"

Four or five men moved hastily from the shadow. They had just placed something in their pockets.

"Must need more votes," thought Rushback, and there was a grim smile on his face over the prospect.

He walked down to his seat. Everything was quiet. Several Senators looked rather strangely, he thought, in his direction. Then

the Secretary of the Senate sent a page to Rushback's desk to inquire whether he wished to be recorded on Senate Bill No. 46, which had passed in his absence.

Bill 46? Bill 46—what was Bill 46?

He went up to the Secretary's desk. The official said, "I thought perhaps you might like to be enrolled on 46, Senator. It can't be done later."

"Thank you," answered Rushback, "but what is the bill?"

There was a look half of incredulity and half of admiration on the Secretary's face.

"Why, that is the Interstate Railroad bill, Senator."

"The—what? The railroad bill? Why, it hasn't been introduced yet."

"Oh, yes, Senator. It was introduced as soon as the session opened this morning, referred to the Railroad Committee, and reported right out favorably and without amendment. Then it was rushed through second reading and to final passage under suspension of the rules. Only four votes against. About the cleverest work I ever knew old Chris Denman to do."

There was a blur in front of the young Senator's eyes. He felt faint as he half staggered out of the Senate chamber.

When he had left the Secretary's desk, the "Fog Horn" came quietly up and said to the Secretary:

"Didn't I tell you that young Senator from Denton County was the greenest apple that ever came out of an orchard?"

Rushback wandered absent-mindedly up the corridor. He was humiliated. His indignation returned, however, when he heard from the corridor recess:

"Ps-st!"

He was very sure that, right afterwards, his uncle Silas laughed.



BEACONS

BY ISABELLA HOWE FISKE

LIKE a lighthouse of the sky,
 Slow-revolving there on high,
 Hangs the moon and flashes out
 Once a month, or thereabout,
 Lest the earth should run ashore
 On some rocky meteor.

THE KAISER'S FAMILY AT CHRISTMAS TIME

By Wolf von Schierbrand

The Last of Three Papers Dealing Intimately with the German Emperor

WHO has not seen Christmas in Germany has never seen it. In other countries it is celebrated but in a half-hearted way, in some scarcely at all. But in Teutoland Christmas is the feast of feasts, the one day in the year when good-will to man becomes a reality; when every past offence is forgiven and the sinner is bidden to stretch his legs under the injured man's mahogany. The streets of village, town, and city for weeks before are thronged with purchasers and sightseers, for every shop window contains the best and prettiest, and everybody buys presents for everybody else. The pungent fragrance of the pine pervades the whole Fatherland, and on Christmas Eve every cottage and hut, no matter how humble, is aglow with shimmering wax tapers. Christmas in Germany makes the misanthrope a lover of his kind.

Berlin especially is always very brilliant at Christmas time; the shops teem with gorgeous trifles, and those devoted to the sale of table dainties display a Gargantuan profusion, the wares decorated with sprays of holly and pine. In the windows of the game dealers rows upon rows of quail and pheasant, partridge and wild turkey, haunches of venison and wild boar, attract attention, and the multitude are tramping all day through the snow-banked streets purchasing such holiday fare as is within their resources. Everybody carries strings of parcels, while laughing children, whose ardor is wrought to fever-heat by the splendor of the spectacle, accompany their parents, with cheeks flushed and eyes sparkling.

The Kaiser has a strong sense of his own dignity—too strong, many think.

On September 9, 1901, after the unveiling, at Königsberg, of a monument to unfortunate Queen Louise, he caused the royal insignia—crown, sceptre, and sword—to be placed, as if for adoration, on the altar of a local church, where they were gazed at from a respectful distance by the awed throng.

To Count Szoegenyi-Marich, the Austrian ambassador in Berlin,

with whom he is on very friendly terms, the Kaiser once said after reading about some of the stormy scenes in the Austrian Reichsrath: "What is this world coming to? Next, I suppose, we shall hear that these roisterers (*ruhestörer*) will fail in respect even to their monarch." And after a violent debate in the German Reichstag, during which a Socialist speaker had referred to him as "one whose bark was almost as bad as his bite," the Kaiser had a bilious attack caused by anger.

But to see the Kaiser at Christmas is to see a man who has shed all these pretensions of the demigod; one who has stepped down from his pedestal to become a good plain burgher, overflowing with the milk of human kindness. No portrait of William II. would be complete and lifelike which should omit this lovable feature of him.

Every Christmas Eve, when early dusk gathers in a northern clime, wrapped in an ample cape mantle, wholly unattended and not easily recognizable, it is his custom to stroll through his park around the Neues Palais, where the boughs are laden with feathery snow, and then through Potsdam. His pockets are full of gold and silver pieces, and like another Santa Claus he distributes his bounty to the children and humbler folk he meets. Nobody is overlooked—the men at the sentry-boxes; the park laborers and the white-haired gardeners in Sans-Souci; the crippled veteran and the sturdy beggar—each and every one receives his dole.

Often he pays at Christmas debts of courtesy incurred during the year. To Baron von Lyncker, his Marshal of the Household, he sent a magnificent present (worth about \$10,000), a chest of solid silver plate, in recognition of the extra and rather vexatious labors that official had had to perform during the year 1900, the year when the Crown Prince attained his majority. To Dr. von Leuthold, his body physician, he handed a fine gold repeater, set in precious stones and bearing the motto: "*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*" This had reference to a past difference in opinion between the doctor and his imperial patient.

William II. has humor. Many Christmas gifts he makes show this. Major-General von Villaume, one of the Kaiser's aides, who has acquired the habit of automatically nodding his head while listening to his Majesty, found on the Christmas tree in the Neues Palais one of those quaint Chinese porcelain mandarins, with a head forever moving in affirmation. To the Crown Prince, his father once made the gift of a fine Aldine edition of Shakespeare, the passage in "Macbeth" marked:

"The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it"

To a head forester with whom he had been playing Skat (a game of cards) at Wustershausen during the hunting season, he sent a new deck of cards, together with a copy of Knigge's "Umgang mit Menschen," a German standard work on polite manners. 'Tis said the crusty old man had been lacking in them, particularly when luck had gone against him.

Christmas is always celebrated by the Kaiser strictly *en famille*. The Empress keeps a special memorandum book in which, year after year, are noted down the presents made to every member of the imperial household (no matter how high or humble), as well as to friends and relatives. The careful study of this little book causes her Majesty, for weeks before the actual festival season, no little thought and anxiety; for duplication must be avoided at all hazards, and the special wishes of each consulted, as far as possible, while valued old servitors must, of course, be specially considered. In her small, dark brougham the Empress nearly every day drives from store to store, making individual purchases.

For the higher officials, relatives, etc., jewelry, watches, sleeve-links, and other trinkets serving for personal adornment are presented, for the Kaiser believes in things of permanent value and capable of constant use. In this connection it may be said that it has occasioned some sarcastic comment that of late years he has quasi-established a rule by which a large percentage of the above named category of gifts has taken the form of twenty-mark gold pieces set in diamonds in the shape of a brooch (for ladies), and ten-mark gold pieces similarly encrusted for sleeve-links (for gentlemen), but it is to be presumed that there were good reasons for making such an innovation.

The Bescheerung (as the distribution of gifts under the spreading Christmas tree is called in Germany) is divided into two parts. First comes the one for the members of the imperial household, from the meanest kitchen scullion upwards, and this takes place in a large gallery of the Neues Palais. Hundreds of small tables are placed there, each covered with presents, and the whole scene is dominated by a Christmas tree, a perfect giant of its kind, and magnificently vivid with its myriad of vari-colored candles, stars and crescents of gold and silver, crystal icicles, iridescent snowballs, and hundreds of other glittering baubles. Each and every one of the servants, higher and lower officials, is spoken to personally by Kaiser and Kaiserin, and the meritorious old servitors are slapped on the shoulder and greeted with a few kindly phrases. The bowing and scraping, hand-kissing and formal expressions of thanks, having at last come to a close, the second part of the Bescheerung takes place.

That is the one exclusively for the imperial family themselves.

780 The Kaiser's Family at Christmas Time

It always takes place in the *Muschelsaal*—that immense hall in the *Neues Palais*, the decoration of which is in mother-of-pearl and beautiful sea-shells and clusters of coral of every kind. For this evening the hall is bordered on each side by evergreens, holly, and mistletoe, forming two graceful hedges wherein dark green is enlivened by scarlet berries, making a fine effect. A beautiful little structure representative of the Manger, showing the Christ-child, the Virgin Mother, and the Shepherd Kings in adoration, is set up in a corner of the hall. This is always the special task of the Kaiser himself.

Then there is a medium-sized tree for the Kaiser and the Kaiserin, and a small one for each of their children—all in a row, with a plethora of gifts beneath. For days previous the *Muschelsaal* has been forbidden ground for the children, even for the darling of the family, Princess Victoria Louise, now a tall, slender girl of thirteen. They, the brothers and sister, have been playing hide-and-seek with their own gifts (all purchased out of their by no means extravagant allowance of pocket money), and now the happy moment has arrived to bring them out.

The Kaiser makes it a rule always to include in his gifts to his family some (generally of slight intrinsic value) which contain a lesson or adorn a tale; often these are whimsical and give rise afterwards to pleasantries within the imperial family. The sons of the Kaiser are: Crown Prince William, born May 6, 1882; Eitel Fritz, born July 7, 1883; Adelbert, July 14, 1884; Augustus William, born January 29, 1887; Oscar, born July 27, 1888; Joachim, born December 17, 1890; and the only daughter, Victoria Louise, was born September 13, 1892; thus all of them are fast getting beyond the childish stage, to the intense vexation of their mother. Nevertheless, the Christmas traditions of their childhood are still kept up, and even the Crown Prince, though now a young benedict, at the *Bescheerung* is treated and behaves like a youngster.

It is a peculiar Hohenzollern family tradition to teach each son a trade. The Crown Prince is a cabinet maker of considerable skill; his next of age, Eitel Fritz, is a locksmith; and so on. Several times the boys have shown their skill in these handicrafts by turning out a neat bit of workmanship for the use of father or mother—a bookcase, bureau, hanging shelf, work basket, a neatly carved picture frame, or similar object; these would form the principal Christmas gifts to the imperial couple.

When the *Bescheerung* is in full blast, everywhere are heard cries of "Oh!" and "Ah!" Delight, surprise, and gratitude on all sides. Mother and father smothered under a shower of kisses, their children running to and fro, inspecting breathlessly newly unearthed

treasures or eying those of brother and sister. Most captivating the stern Kaiser is then. Standing before his own "lay-out," he shows all the boyish good-nature and curiosity of his sons—poking his nose into this box or that case, making pretense of being unable to untie a parcel wrapped up with particular cunning, glancing through some new books or a portfolio of rare prints, smiling, laughing, and shouting, and being a child again among children.

Intrinsically, the gifts of the Empress are always of greatest value. Her husband made it a point from the start to present to her, every year, some fine addition to her stock of jewelry, artistic fans, carvings, rare laces, costly knick-knacks, or some *chef d'œuvre* of craftsmanship. Nearly every year, though, he includes some handiwork of his own—an album of sketches, etc. Thus, after the Palestine trip which he and his wife took in 1898, he presented to her at Christmas following a collection of water colors, descriptive of the most memorable scenes they had witnessed.

A supper, served strictly *en famille*, winds up this evening of evenings. Certainly no Christmas in all Germany brings more happiness than that in the imperial family.



THE HOLLY BERRIES

BY MINNA IRVING

IN the summer through the forest
Came a wood-nymph fair and young,
And her crimson coral necklace
On a branch of holly hung,
And among the quiet shadows
Of the cedars, dark and cool,
Took a bath in sweet seclusion
In the waters of the pool.

But she heard a step approaching,
And she left the pool and ran,
And forgot her pretty trinket
In her terror of a man;
So the wreath of Christmas holly,
With its knots of ribbon red,
Keeps the beads of carven coral
Which she left it when she fled.

THE MIRACLE AT BENDED SPUR

By Edward Childs Carpenter

DR. BRUCE McFARLAND shook the mercury down into the bulb, and, with the air of an old practitioner, turned to Joe Jennings, foreman of the Bended Spur Gold Mine. "Here," commanded the young physician, "stick that under your tongue, and don't bite it."

Jennings, who was thrashing about on a cot in Fallon's Hotel, snatched the thermometer and flung it savagely across the room. It narrowly missed the proprietor of that famous resort, and broke into fragments against the unplastered wall.

"You're a ijiot!" was Fallon's comment. "If I was the Doc, I'd break your face."

With an oath, the sick man consigned McFarland to eternal damnation. Then, growing indignant, he continued: "I didn't send no sheriff's posse after him. Who the devil asked him to hang up his shingle in the Spur, any way? Was anybody sick here afore he come? No, I guess not! And now Wally's down with the pip, Carson's kids has the measles, and all hell's broke loose in my interior."

"You'd better quit the job," advised Fallon, addressing McFarland, who was bending over his surgical case.

"Not yet," returned the doctor, as he uncorked a small blue bottle and loaded a needle-pointed syringe. "I'm going to give him a hypodermic injection of morphine."

"Morphine? That's poison! Ain't it dangerous?" queried the Irishman.

"Yes, but not in the quantity I'm using."

Jennings was suffering too much to notice the action of McFarland, who deftly caught the miner's wrist and jabbed the needle under the bronzed skin.

With a howl of pain, Jennings struck at the physician, who warded off the blow and pinned his patient's arms to the cot. "If you've got sense enough to keep quiet for a few minutes," he remarked calmly, "you'll feel a lot better. You're a sick man, and

this nonsense will only make you worse. It looks like typhoid," he added, after a little, releasing his hold.

Jennings became quiet and soon passed off into a doze.

"Joe's the popularest man in the Spur," commented Fallon, making for the door. "Do your best for him, Doc. I'm goin' down to the bar to tell the boys how he's doin'."

McFarland sat by the window, looking absently over the mountains, thinking of his bride of six months, left behind in Denver. Presently he took a letter from his pocket and read it through. The last paragraph worried him. It ran:

You have been gone a month now, long enough to know if the place is fit for me. But I shall try to be patient and wait a week longer. Then, if you do not come to me, I shall go to you.

Your lonely one,

KATHARINE.

He was still intent upon his letter when Jennings stirred. The young man went to the cot. Conscious, but still under the calming influence of the drug, the miner permitted him to make a thorough examination.

"Yes, it's typhoid," he muttered. "No more morphine. The disease must run its course without further medication."

McFarland had no sooner made this decision than Jennings, again convulsed with pain, begged for another hypodermic. When it was refused him he reached to a chair close by his cot, fumbled among his clothes, and produced a six-shooter.

"Look here, young feller," he threatened, propping himself up on one elbow and leveling the pistol, "if you don't give me one of them doses quicker than I can count ten, I'll give you a pill that ain't in no way calculated to preserve your health."

McFarland shook his head and laughed. "You can't bully me, old man!"

"Are you goin' to give me that hyper thing?"

"No."

McFarland almost felt the brush of a bullet and was deafened by a pistol shot. He was only assured that he was not deaf when he heard Jennings's mirthful comment, "That's about as close as I can come without hittin'."

The smoke had mostly cleared away when Fallon rushed into the room. He was amazed to see McFarland administering an injection to the belligerent patient. In ten minutes Jennings was asleep again.

"I've had enough of this, Fallon," snapped the young man, packing his surgical case. "I don't propose to practise medicine under mob rule."

"I'll take care of his gun if you'll stay along," the Irishman assured him.

"What'd be the use? One of his friends would come along and fit him out with a brace of them. I know this camp, and I'm sick of it."

Fallon sighed. "I don't blame you, but if I calls at the shack, Doc, you'll advise me concernin' them baths and feedin' fer him, won't you?"

"Oh, I'll do whatever I can in that line as long as I stay, but I won't answer for the result."

It was in an unhappy state of mind that McFarland returned to his cabin. Clearly there was no use in trying to establish a practice in Bended Spur. He would get out as soon as he had the storekeeper's child cured of measles. Calculating that he might get a letter off by the stage, which left that afternoon, he wrote a hasty note to his wife, saying that she might expect him in Denver by the end of the week. But this letter was not mailed. As McFarland approached the post-office, which stood across the road from Fallon's, Jennings, whose cot commanded a view of the thoroughfare, caught sight of his physician, and, in a delirium, seized his pistol and, more by accident than skill, shot McFarland through the leg. The sound of the shot brought Fallon and the loafers at the bar to the door. They picked the wounded man up and carried him into Jennings's room. There they laid him upon a cot beside that of the sick miner, and dressed his wound.

"Good shot—for a loony man, eh, Doc?" laughed one.

"Clipped a neat little hole right through the calf," joked another.

"Never broke a thing," observed Fallon. "You'll be fit to travel on crutches in a couple of days."

"I'll get good and square with Jennings for this," declared McFarland in a passion.

At which the assembly laughed, and Jennings, who had recovered his wits, grinned and said, "In the mean time, havin' collected your tools for you, I'd be obliged fer a jab of dope."

"All right, you idiot," retorted McFarland; "doctor yourself to death, for all I care. Give me that blue bottle and the needle, Fallon."

The Irishman dug them out of the case and examined them critically. "Look here, Doc, will this dope kill him?" he asked.

"No; but that's not the way to treat typhoid. Besides, I don't think he's got half the pain he says he has. It don't go with the disease. I believe he likes the effect."

It was decided, however, that, since they were assured that the

hypodermic injections, given in moderation, would not kill the patient, he should have them whenever the pain became intense.

In five days Jennings was dead; and on the day after his demise a vigilance committee, composed of friends of the late mine foreman, waited upon Dr. Bruce McFarland. It was very clear to the committee that he had hypodermically poisoned Jennings, in revenge for that shot through the leg. Had they not heard him declare that he would get even? And, while granting that he had chosen a clever method, they came to the conclusion that Bended Spur in particular and the country in general would be better off without the ministrations of the young physician from Denver. Even Fallon, who had a sneaking fondness for McFarland, made no protest against the finding of this self-impanelled jury.

About a mile from the camp, and a hundred yards from the trail, stood a great blasted oak, pointing a solitary bare limb southward. In the distance this tree looked like a one-armed scarecrow. The vigilance committee found the spot to its liking. They placed McFarland under the gaunt limb, threw a noose over it, and fastened it about his neck.

"If you've got anything to say, say it quick," enjoined Davis, chairman of the committee. "It's noon, an' your time's up."

McFarland moistened his dry lips with his tongue, and began: "I know there's nothing that I can say which will convince you of my innocence; but I could prove it if you'd give me a chance. I propose to give myself the same sort of an injection as I gave Jennings. There are among you here three or four men who, like Fallon, have been present when I administered hypodermics to Jennings. They have seen me load the syringe. They know the very bottle. Let one of you get my surgical case, bring it here, identify the bottle, and see that I give myself precisely the same dose that I gave him. What do you say?"

Without waiting to hear the committee's decision, Fallon started back to the camp on a run. In the mean time there was a heated discussion of McFarland's proposition, but the majority voted against its acceptance.

"We've come to the conclusion," announced Davis, "that this proposition of yours is square enough, only we think that you'd a durn sight rather die with the dope than accordin' to regulations. And, not to be short with you, I'd remark that we opine as hangin' is jist about good enough for you."

As Davis fastened a handkerchief about McFarland's eyes, the rattle of wheels and the drum of hoofs, coming from the direction of camp, startled the committee for a moment. They concluded, however, that it must be Fallon, who, in haste to return, had doubt-

less pressed a mule team into service. In this surmise they were correct, but, to their astonishment, he did not come alone. Beside him sat a dainty little woman—such a one as had never before invaded the district of Bended Spur—clinging tightly to his driving arm. As the team swung clattering from the trail, she jumped from the wagon and ran toward the committee.

"No fool gal ain't goin' to butt into this ceremony," remarked Davis, advancing to meet her.

Just then the girl tripped and fell forward. Every man sprang toward her. Davis, however, reached her first and gathered her up clumsily as the others closed about him.

"Are you hurt?" he inquired, holding her in his arms and quite willing that she should stay here.

"N-no," she gasped tremulously, clutching his shirt sleeve; "only—only—oh—oh—wait a moment!" She let her pretty head fall wearily upon his arm.

Fallon, with the surgical case in his hand, pushed his way through the group. The girl looked up at his appearance and, still clinging to Davis, said timorously: "Tell them!"

"This is McFarland's wife," he announced. The men looked from one to the other grimly. "She came up in the stage. She was waitin' in his shack for him when I broke in for the dope. I—I told her."

Davis touched the girl's shoulder. "It's tough, little girl," he muttered, "but—ah, Fallon, take her away."

She seized Davis, and his cold gray eyes shifted under the appealing look in her blue ones. "No, no," she entreated. "Listen! You—you believe he did this thing—very well—but you should give him a chance to—to prove his innocence."

"We can't let him give himself no dope," returned Davis. "That'd be cheatin' justice. He's got to—to go the regulation way. We decided that."

"Of course, of course," she exclaimed readily; "but I've a better plan. Ask him if he is willing to give me an injection of morphine, such as you believe he used to kill your friend; and let its effect upon me determine—what—what you shall do with him."

She smiled at their astonishment, and added: "While you are consulting—and I know you are all fair enough to agree to my proposal—I should like to speak to Bruce."

At a nod from Davis, she ran to McFarland and laid her hands on his shoulders. He knew her touch and gave an exclamation of horror.

"Hush, dear," she began excitedly, trembling; "it's all right. Not a word. Do whatever they say. I'm not afraid." She drew his head down and laid her cheek against his.

"Kate! Kate!" he murmured, and tugged at the cord which bound his wrists behind him.

"We've decided to let you try it on," announced Davis, advancing to McFarland and removing bonds and bandage. "We don't want to make no mistakes, and maybe you ain't to blame; at least, we don't calculate you'd run the risk of puttin' this here gal out. Well, go ahead."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" exclaimed Kate.

McFarland looked at her and then at the men surrounding him. "What am I—what are you—to do?" he asked.

"You're to give her the same thing you gave him out of this blue bottle," answered Fallon, passing bottle and syringe for the inspection of the committee.

McFarland brightened up. "That's fair."

"Isn't it!" exclaimed the girl. "They all seem to know that you wouldn't hurt me." She looked at the committee with an all-embracing smile, and the committee grinned back sheepishly.

"You are satisfied that this is the drug and the syringe that I used?" asked McFarland, taking them from Davis.

There was a chorus of "yes" from Fallon and several of the men who had witnessed the administration of hypodermics to the late Joe Jennings.

"Then, I am ready, dear," said the girl.

With a blanket spread upon the ground and with his coat for a pillow, McFarland made a couch for his wife. The committee drew near to where she lay, facing the west and the great gaunt limb of the oak casting its shadow over her. The physician's hand shook as he filled the old-fashioned metal syringe, and he lost count of the drops, for his head was in such a whirl that he scarcely knew what he was doing. After satisfying Fallon that all was regular, McFarland knelt beside his wife and pushed back the sleeve from her white arm. He was pinching up the skin carefully, preparatory to inserting the needle, when Davis suddenly called upon him to stop.

"No, you don't!" he cried, with a catch in his voice. "You'll take that dope yourself." And, strangely enough, the committee agreed with him to a man.

The girl protested that she had absolutely no fear, but Davis would hear of nothing now but that McFarland himself should be given the hypodermic. So it was that he changed places with his wife, and she very daintily, and not a little frightened, administered the injection to him.

"How long will it be before you come out o' that, Doc?" asked Fallon, as McFarland lay back on the blanket, smiling at the girl who sat on the grass beside him, her hand in his.

"Three or four hours at the most," was the reply.

The committee put in the time playing three-card monte. They became so interested in their game that it was nearly five o'clock, by Fallon's Waterbury, when they threw down their cards.

"Ain't it time he was wakin' up?" queried Davis, strolling over to the girl.

She knew quite a little about medicine, having quizzed McFarland in his student days, and now, with a pretty professional air, she felt of his pulse. It was full, slow, and strong. She also noted that his respiration was slow and deep. "I'm afraid that might have been a very large dose, and he's not very strong," she returned, a trifle anxiously. "The effect may not pass off for an hour yet."

The committee dealt another hand around.

The girl kept her fingers on McFarland's wrist.

As the sun dropped lower in the west, a look of great anxiety spread over Kate's features. Bruce's pulse grew feebler, more rapid; his respirations became distant, slower, and imperfect, and were interrupted by intervals of almost death-like quiet. The girl became frightened. She tried to rouse her husband. The men left their cards and stood around her, looking solemnly down at McFarland's pallid face.

"Can't you wake him?" asked Davis.

"N-o!" she sobbed.

Fallon ran to a near-by brook and, filling his hat, dashed the water into Bruce's face. It had no effect. Kate ceased sobbing. She was kneeling beside her husband, staring at him, dumb with horror.

Davis laid his ear to McFarland's breast. Then he rose and, with a sigh, turned away. Fallon bent over the still figure, vainly seeking for some show of life. Finally he looked up at his companions and shook his head.

It was a remorseful vigilance committee that drew aside and consulted as to what should be done. Fallon's suggestion—that he take the girl to his wife and leave the committee to bear the body to the shack—was adopted. But when he asked Kate to go with him, she refused, and begged them to leave her alone.

They left her then, Fallon promising the others that in a little while he would return with his wife.

The sun flung a long russet trail across the plain and up the mountain slope, enveloping the form of the man, lying, like one asleep, upon the greensward, and the girl who knelt silently beside him, staring with wild, dry eyes into that pale face.

Nature was effecting a change in the landscape: the day was

dying. Nature was also effecting a change in the man: he was returning to life. And that return from a period of suspended life, caused by the overdose of morphine, was as gradual as the passing of the day.

With returning consciousness, the man opened his eyes. The first object they beheld was the girl, her head haloed with the lingering light. There was ecstatic wonder—madness, almost—in the look she fixed upon him; and so still she knelt there that, but for the quivering of her half-parted lips, he must have thought her some glorious image, like those niched in cathedral aisles. But he found, when his arms were about her and her head was on his shoulder, that she was only a woman.



CHRISTMAS EVE FANTASIES

BY KATHARINE LEE BATES

THE Kings of the East are riding
To-night to Bethlehem.

The sunset glows dividing,
The Kings of the East are riding,
A star their journey guiding;
Gleaming with gold and gem,
The Kings of the East are riding
To-night to Bethlehem.

To a strange, sweet harp of Zion
The starry host troops forth;
The golden-glaived Orion
To a strange, sweet harp of Zion;
The Archer and the Lion,
The Watcher of the North;
To a strange, sweet harp of Zion
The starry host troops forth.

There beams above a manger
The child-face of a star;
Amid the stars a stranger,
It beams above a manger;
What means this ether-ranger
To pause where poor folk are?
There beams above a manger
The child-face of a star.

FROM THE BACKGROUND'S POINT OF VIEW

By Jean Louise West

WE hadn't cared whether we met the new chemistry teacher or not, Carolyn and I. No, we're not sisters. Carolyn's father was my guardian, and I have lived at their house for several years.

Carolyn is a beauty and a subduer of hearts. She has whole basketfuls of masculine ones tucked away somewhere as souvenirs.

I am background. I don't like backgrounding especially, but I can't help it, and one may as well be pleasant background—it doesn't ruin your disposition quite so soon.

But to return to the chemistry teacher. I had noticed that he was shorter than I, which prejudiced me against him. His being a chemistry teacher prejudiced Carolyn. She was firmly convinced that she knew enough scientists as it was. Moreover, the principal of the high school had described him to us in radiant colors, so we knew there must be a tremendous flaw about him somewhere. Besides that, Stewart Ross, who rooms at the same house with him, said he was harmless (poor Stew!) and that prejudiced us all around.

I happened to be the one Stewart was supposed to admire. I never understood why he had not fallen an easy victim to Carolyn, as she seemed, at several different times, to be engaged on his conquest. But accidents will happen.

The town in which we live is one of the Western sort that is neither large nor small—with etiquette according.

One evening as Stewart walked home with me from my studio (I paint) he volunteered to bring Mr. Medford, the chemistry teacher, up to call. I yawned and said, "Very well," with a resigned inflection. Carolyn yawned when I told her, and I am sure Mr. Medford yawned several times that evening before he started, because he had to suppress one or two after he reached the house. That was the last time for a while that any of us yawned.

He was an insignificant-looking man, which was one point in his favor—looks can be spared in a man more easily than anything else. He had sandy hair and light blue eyes, but he was as trim and starched

and creased as it was possible to be. Also he was blasé. No, not the sort of man who *thinks* he is blasé, but the sort that *is*. In spite of this, however, his social qualities developed rapidly. He had a most deferential manner; he was tact personified; he applauded our little witticisms and anecdotes quite immoderately; he hung on our words. In fact, he was an all-around man, and we took to him as to a new style in sleeves or a tally-ho party.

Well, things started out in the usual auspicious way for me. I make a better first impression than Carolyn—I am more harmless looking. At first people are a little distrustful of the brunetteness of Carolyn's eyes and hair; but it isn't long before I see breakers ahead, and begin work on my speech of capitulation to Carolyn. Just now Mr. Medford was addressing his cleverer observations in my direction. You know how it is—no remark of yours, however foolish, escapes notice.

We sat and talked in the reception room a while, then Carolyn proposed that we should go to make a farewell call on a girl up the avenue, who was to leave next morning.

It was a warm evening, and when we had fluttered down the veranda I noticed that Carolyn was walking off with Mr. Medford. I wondered vaguely how it happened, because a minute before he had stood waiting for me and holding my poppy hat at the hall mirror while I pinned up a stray lock of hair. My interest, which had been flagging slightly on account of lack of opposition, came back at once.

Reaching Miss Hunter's drawing-room, Carolyn seemed more determined than customary on monopolizing the conversation and shutting out all competition. Usually she is a very entertaining talker, and scores by it right along, but when she goes in for monopolization she overdoes it. To-night, with tirelessness and dexterity, Carolyn brought out her narratives, at whose recital I had sat a listener time after time. I was tired of them; moreover, I had a few things to say myself and wanted to say them, so I roused up and plunged in for the glory of the clan. Conversation was fast and furious. Miss Hunter is a pompous young woman who likes to be accorded the middle of the stage, and no opposition. Well, she was in a position now where one had to fight for the middle—and then didn't get it. She retreated into her corner and looked stiffly on. This should have disturbed us, but it didn't. We entertained ourselves. Then I began to remember (from experience) how Miss Hunter must feel, so at intervals I tried to throw her a rope from the conversational whirl. But she would have none of it.

When we rose to go Mr. Medford, at my elbow, whispered that he had a story to tell me on the way home. Then Carolyn called

him to her to inspect an etching, and a minute later I beheld her again walking off with him. So I walked home with Stew, and didn't hear the story. I couldn't tell how she did it—but that I have never been able to do. I have rather admired Carolyn's skill in this line—when it was directed at some one else. I have been tempted to laugh on seeing some airy new girl get trippingly in Carolyn's way. I foresaw what would happen. Before the girl knew it she would be gagged and bound, so to speak, and parcelled off with poor feather-brained Donald Cooper—not even guessing how the first string came about her. As for me, Carolyn doesn't partner me off with Donald Cooper any more. I am still in the chrysalis stage, but I am past Donald Cooper.

It was still early when we reached home, and Stewart and Mr. Medford came in and stayed a while longer. After they went Carolyn's mother, who sat embroidering in the sitting-room, said some very pointed things about the steady flow of conversation, and that she noticed the gentlemen's chances to say anything had been very small. I began to feel myself shrinking towards the size of a—a beetle, perhaps. Then she added that she had timed Carolyn and found she monopolized three-fourths of the conversation; the other fourth, only, she attributed to me. So I stopped shrinking at about the size of a sheep.

We went up to our little sitting-room without parley. Carolyn turned and riveted her black eyes upon me. "Did you think I talked too much, Nerissa?" she flashed.

I answered that I thought we should have allowed Miss Hunter to make a few remarks during our call there.

There wasn't any more conversation after that.

The next day, in the park, Carolyn walked up to Mr. Medford and told him I said she had talked too much.

It is lucky that I think so much of my painting, and that I am bent upon a career. That, of course, eliminates any man, though I know the masculine sex can be very interesting, and I like them.

Carolyn hates careers. It is absolutely necessary to her to have three or four men hanging about doing homage. Having this sort of thing under my nose so much, I got sucked into the vortex, so to speak. You always want to try the interesting-looking things you see other people doing, if you stand by and look on long enough. So, just as an experiment, I started in to understudy Carolyn and to gather data.

I got the data.

A few evenings later Mr. Medford again came up with Stewart to call; we had rather expected that he would. Carolyn did not come down from her room until after they had arrived, then she

appeared in a soft, rose-figured, trailing gown. I had on my street walking-skirt and a checked gingham waist. Carolyn had not told me she was going to elaborate, though it was an unwritten rule that one should signify to the other when she intended any flourishes of toilet.

Carolyn really possesses a conscience, but it is different from other people's.

To-night she was full of tricks. A favorite *coup* of hers was to send Stewart and me off to find a magazine, or the chafing dish, or some nuts. Carolyn knows I never can find anything; besides that, she usually told me the wrong place. I wouldn't know I'd been sent until I got back and found Carolyn off in an alcove, talking in a low voice to Mr. Medford. And of course we couldn't interrupt.

This particular evening I felt quite brisk and energetic: I said to myself with enthusiasm: "Here's where I do a *coup* after Carolyn's own heart! Watch me!" So I remarked (Mr. Medford was showing me some music at the piano): "Carolyn, do get those snapshot pictures of you, that are upstairs in the library, and show them to Stew. He hasn't seen them."

Whereupon Carolyn called her small brother Winston, gave him full directions, and sent him. Of course Winston couldn't find them, and, after calling out to him for a long time about drawers and doors and keys, Carolyn proposed that we all go up and execute Winston and bring them down ourselves. When we reached the library Carolyn handed the pictures to me. "Nerissa, I'll let you show them to Stewart," she said, "and, since Mr. Medford has seen them, I'll take him to the tower-room for a view of the river."

So I showed them to Stew after all, and bade good-by to *coups*.

Even at the close of that evening, however, Mr. Medford's preferences didn't seem to run particularly to Carolyn, who hinted darkly that she was tired of answering his observations about Miss Morris (which is I). So I took heart. I was becoming thoroughly interested, not on account of the rivalry now, but because Mr. Medford seemed to be the philosophical, well-balanced man that I had been sure existed somewhere, a man who was a real satisfaction to one's judgment of people.

Poor Stew! He never showed by a word or look that he realized he had been his own undoing. I guess he intended to die with his boots on. But he shouldn't have told us the man was harmless!

At home we discussed Mr. Medford's many sterling qualities for the delectation of Carolyn's mother, father, and sister. We wore the family out. We prejudiced them forever against him.

Well, I was being partnered off with Stew right along. Then Stew had to leave town for a little while on business. That stayed

Carolyn's hand somewhat, for when Mr. Medford came up to call all three of us must necessarily sit and talk together. The conversational contest still went on. Carolyn had taken to discoursing on her own exclusive interests in a way that seemed in very bad taste to me. I kept getting more wrought up right along, as I sat and listened to monologues on Carolyn's height, Carolyn's weight, Carolyn's fright of lightning, of mice, of high places. But I was helpless.

As Mr. Medford was leaving after the third evening's call, Carolyn said sweetly: "I do wish Stewart would hurry up and come back!" Mr. Medford looked at me, and I looked at him. I didn't wish it. Neither did he at that stage of affairs.

The next day Stewart returned. Wherever the four of us were, I was bundled off with Stew. I began fairly to hate Stew. I wasn't even allowed to talk with Mr. Medford—and it was no use to try to upset things, for I wouldn't know what to do after I got them upset.

The following incident jarred upon me for some time, I take lunch and dinner down-town at a café; but the café had to close a few days for remodelling, so, for the interim, I went to a hotel across the street. At my first lunch there I was sitting beside an open window when Mr. Medford passed in the street just outside and bowed. A few minutes later he entered the hotel and came over to my table. He said he also was starting, that noon, to board there. It happened quite by accident, I feel sure, for he said it did. He took a chair at my table, and we had a very enjoyable tête-à-tête.

Of course I mentioned it to Carolyn. The next day she came down to my studio just before lunch-time and suggested that she should go to lunch with me. I responded cordially, while I straightened up some easels and hunted up my white duck jacket. When we reached the hotel Mr. Medford was already at my table. I offered Carolyn the vacant seat near him, where I had sat formerly. She took it at once, while I went around to the foot. Then Carolyn promptly proceeded to forget that I was a castaway at the bottom of the table. I couldn't even hear what they talked about, though Mr. Medford tried to span the distance with a condoling remark now and then.

The next day Carolyn again came to my studio before lunch-time, and again offered to go to lunch with me. I began to realize that Carolyn had a connectedness of plan and a superbness of nerve that even I had underestimated.

This time Carolyn took the seat next to Mr. Medford without waiting for me to offer it. At the end of that lunch it became evident to me that Carolyn was rapidly gaining ground. I was sorry now that I had explained the propinquity theory to her—you know what it is: that a man and a woman having similar tastes and being

thrown together to the exclusion (!) of others, come to care for one another.

By the third day I had grown to expect Carolyn's company to lunch. I couldn't decide whether she wanted to use up my set of meal-tickets (which would insure my leaving the society of Mr. Medford at meal-time, for my own already reopened café) or whether she was testing the propinquity proposition.

But the climax was Carolyn's old-rose party dress. There was to be a reception, given by an eccentric woman, and, for some unknown reason, I didn't receive an invitation. You know how you feel when a woman leaves you off her invitation list—no matter how much you dislike the woman, or how little you or any one else wants to go. Carolyn had firmly decided not to go, for several reasons: there was to be no dancing; she abhorred this particular kind of reception, also the woman; also a number of the people who would be there. I encouraged her to go. No, I didn't do it as a means of getting even—I was really trying to be magnanimous.

Well, Stewart walked home with me from dinner the evening of the reception; incidentally, he mentioned that Mr. Medford was going to the affair. I was disgusted with Stewart for telling me, for I felt obliged to go and tell Carolyn (because I'm afraid of that old saying—something about ill deeds, like chickens, coming home to roost). I knew she would at once decide to go. I knew also that she was irresistible in a party gown, and that she would make every stroke count. I bade Stew a curt good-night at the door and went in.

Everything happened exactly as I expected. Later that evening, when Carolyn came down-stairs in the gauzy old-rose party gown, looking like—well, like Cleopatra, I knew it was all over with me.

Carolyn went, and I worked on a water-color till late that evening, and thought about virtue being its own reward and hoped faintly for some other. Just merely feeling good and self-righteous gets tiresome after a while.

When I heard the carriage driving up with the girls, I went down to the veranda. Carolyn swept sparkingly up to me, her black hair flying in little wavy streaks across her eyes. "Mr. Medford has asked me to go to the theatre with him to-morrow night," she said.

"That will be charming," I responded. I presume I overdid the cordiality part. Then I went up to the tower room and looked out at the oaks and the moonlight, and thought about my career.

The next morning I happened to remember a line from "Othello" about "The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief"—

so I went in for smiles. It really seemed to baffle Carolyn, for she observed sweetly: "You're such an amiable girl, Nerissa!" I felt like making a face at her, but I didn't; I had to go on being amiable.

Well, in short order, Mr. Medford became so occupied with Carolyn that he didn't know I was around. I whisked off to my room and hunted up more recipes in "Othello." The worse things grew, the more pleasant and gay and agreeable I was obliged to be; and what with Carolyn's commenting on it, this conduct became very tiresome.

Then what should happen but that Carolyn's aunt, away off in Minnesota, should get sick and send for Carolyn, in whose favor her will is made out.

After Carolyn's departure, Mr. Medford happened to remember me and sought me out and walked home with me seven nights from dinner. He seemed to have forgotten which one of us he'd been smitten on last; probably he has a short memory—I should think he'd need to have. Stew was gone now, too. Mr. Medford also came up to my studio seven afternoons; also he invited me to attend the theater four evenings. I didn't go.

I knew Carolyn was fretting and fidgeting and chafing over being away just then, and I couldn't help but laugh in my sleeve, for she would be remembering that there was a vice versa side to propinquity.

The seventh night that Mr. Medford walked home with me was an exquisite moonlight evening. We turned off onto a leafy-roofed street that stretched ahead in a straight, elm-arched vista. Here and there, through the high tree tops, were gold-edged wisps of cloud that looked like enchanted islands.

We began to talk of painting. Mr. Medford seemed in a blue and serious mood. From painting we drifted to careers. He was looking forward to having one, too, and I told him about mine. He seemed interested. He asked quietly if I realized how much patience and perseverance and renunciation it required for a woman to win in that sort of thing. I answered that I supposed I didn't, but that I should probably know before I got through. He had such a logical way of saying things that it made me feel like a high-school girl talking metaphysics to Swedenborg.

He was silent a while. Then he said coolly: "You haven't any business in the world with a career, little girl."

"Little girl"!—I am taller than he, you know.

The moon was peering down into the street from a narrow streak of sky between the tree tops, and, almost before I knew it, Mr. Medford was telling me that old, old story that goes with moonlight and

such things. He told it gently and seriously. I answered as gently as I could, but in the negative, not reminding him of the time when he had forgotten I was around.

Finally he said: "Think about it a while, Nerissa."

"I did quite a bit of thinking," I said, "some time ago." Then, to help things out, I asked: "Do you remember that *envoi* of Kipling's that starts out, 'He travels the fastest who travels alone'?"

"Yes," he said, looking straight at me; "I remember it." Pause. "Do you imagine, Nerissa, that you're the sort of woman who will travel alone?"

"I will," I retorted—"unless Carolyn sends Stew along."

As he left me at the porch he said gravely: "Well, good luck to your brush and palette!"

"*Bon voyage* to Heidelberg," I said. "Perhaps we'll meet on Mount Parnassus—with our laurels!"

And lo! when Carolyn came home, two weeks later, Mr. Medford was deeply in love with a pretty little music-teacher. It turned out that, with all his philosophy, he couldn't keep his mind on a girl forty-eight hours after he lost sight of her.

For my part, I was thinking that, though I had had a bedrabbled sort of inning, Carolyn would never know (for I don't even talk in my sleep), and off in a dark, shameless corner of my heart it seemed kind of a pity.

The third day after Carolyn got back, however, she came up to our little sitting-room with her eyes ablaze. "Winston has just been telling me that as he came home from papa's office one evening a couple of weeks ago, he saw you and Mr. Medford ahead of him, and heard Mr. Medford trying to persuade you to marry him. *Why* didn't you tell me?"

"I think it would have been too crude," I said. I stood up straight and looked Carolyn over—and the blaze sort of went out of her eyes. Then I began to want to say things I had never said to Carolyn before. So I went at it. I said all that good manners allowed and a balance over. Carolyn didn't reply at all; she walked to the door and went out, and there wasn't any more conversation between us for a while.

So now neither one of us would take him as a gift. Anyhow, I am going to marry Stew after all. I have discovered that, if he isn't the most philosophical man in the world, at least he has good staying qualities. Carolyn has offered to be maid of honor, and now I've got to keep my head about me or, if she takes a notion, she'll step in and be the bride.

CHILO

A MODERN SEA YARN

By Aldridge Evelyn

CHILO was not his real name. When a midshipman some one nicknamed him; now he was a lieutenant—moreover, one of nearly three years' seniority—yet still Chilo.

To our captain—a dear old thing in his dotage—Chilo was at once a delight and a nightmare. Should he call in his apologetic way for the officer of the watch, then Chilo would appear instantaneously, and, like the clown in pantomime, apparently from nowhere.

"Officer of the watch."

"Sir," a guttural voice would answer instantly, and Chilo, stiff, alert, and motionless, was at the old man's elbow, thereby frightening him out of his five senses.

Another pretty trick had Chilo. On watch in harbor he always carried a telescope. Now, much practice had enabled him to drop that telescope from under his arm and, while keeping his eyes straight to the front and body perfectly rigid, to catch the glass in his hand before it reached the deck. The captain had seen him do it many times, yet the polite old man could never refrain from dashing forward to save the glass from what seemed instant destruction.

So much for introduction; now for the yarn.

We, the Channel Fleet, had that afternoon weighed our muddy anchors, and had steamed out of the muddiest harbor in the world—that of Vigo. Frantic efforts had our old Cup-of-Tea made to imperil not only our own safety, but that of the whole fleet. How he escaped ramming three ships and being rammed by a fourth only the "little cherub that sits up aloft" knows. The standing luck of the British Navy, coupled with the strenuous efforts of our navigator—second to none—must have saved us. Now, however, we were outside; third ship in the second division, and, for us, in station.

Benignly the old captain beamed on the fleet and world in general. We had got out of harbor, and save for a few pages of sarcastic writing in our Signal Book—admiral's private opinion of ourselves—were none the worse for the experience.

Now, it was the captain's custom to celebrate such feats as the

foregoing escape by asking the navigator to join him in a quiet discourse of mutual appreciation in the chart-house. For that purpose two sacred and identical pipes, one marked "C," the other "N," also a tin of superlatively sacred tobacco, were kept in a chart-house drawer. Such a red-letter day as this could, of course, be no exception to the rule. For nearly an hour the two puffed and praised one another, before at length going below at about three o'clock.

At six o'clock Chilo and I took over the bridge and settled down to the monotony of the second dog-watch. It is law unalterable that the lieutenant of the second dog asks his midshipman to dine with him at eight. Consequently Chilo and I passed half an hour pleasantly enough discussing the ward-room menu and making substantial additions thereunto.

Then two bells struck. "Place bow and steaming lights," shouted Chilo.

I rushed to see it done, returning, in about a minute, to find my senior seriously bored.

"Snottie," said he, "being under eighteen and not allowed to smoke, have you perchance a cigarette?"

"Search me!" I said, turning out all my pockets in vain.

"A miracle!" cried Chilo. "Yet what in the deuce shall I do for a smoke?"

"The skipper's pipe is in the chart-house," I squeaked. Midshipmen of tender years are known as squeakers.

"Good boy!" cried Chilo. "Look out for the ship and the skipper—chiefly the skipper;" and he dived down the ladder.

Now, the chances of the captain coming on the bridge at such an hour—gin-and-bitters time—were of the remotest. Nevertheless, keeping half an eye on the fourteen-thousand-ton battle-ship ahead of us, I kept one and a half glued on the fore-and-aft bridge.

Suddenly, to my amazement, I saw the old man coming. My dive down the port ladder equalled Chilo's, while the way he shoved the pipe in its drawer and nipped up the starboard has never been beaten.

By that time the enemy was on us. I saluted gravely, and fervently prayed he might go on up to the bridge. Not a bit of it! He put his gray head into the chart-house and then started back.

"Some one has been smoking in this chart-house!"

I said nothing, and kept on saying it.

"The chart-house is full of smoke, sir." This time he addressed me directly.

I again said nothing.

"Who is the officer of the watch, sir?"

My lips moved, but words failed to come.

"Officer of the watch!" he shouted.

That was fatal. The suddenness of Chilo's appearance almost flabbergasted me; while the way he clicked his heels, saluted, dropped his telescope, and then calmly ignored the captain's frantic effort to save what was already safe, were a combined masterpiece.

Had the gods been with us, the old boy's nerves would have been so shattered that he would have forgotten what he had intended to say and gone below to steady them. But now he waited a few seconds to recover breath, and then opened the ball with a vengeance.

"Some one has been smoking in that chart-house, sir;" and he eyed Chilo as sternly as he was able.

Chilo's astonishment knew no bounds. "Really, sir!"

"That chart-house is full of smoke, sir." The captain was working himself up.

Chilo looked in and sniffed loudly—its atmosphere you could barely have cut with a razor; so, removing his cap, he went through the motions of thinking profoundly.

Then the captain entered the chart-house, and, opening a drawer, placed the sacred pipe marked "C" in his mouth. I thought he would have apoplexy. Between the clouds of smoke which curled from his mouth he at length sputtered: "My—my—my pipe's alight, sir."

The face of Holmes—Sherlock Holmes—at the bottom of a world-paralyzing mystery was nothing to Chilo's. "Ah!" (It was an "ah" of vast relief.) "Ah! now I see, sir," said he.

"You see, sir? What do you see?" demanded the captain.

"It confirms, sir, what I have often told the navigator." The quiet conviction in Chilo's voice would have converted a Turk. "That that tobacco you and he use is simply chock-full of saltpetre, sir; once you light it, it will simply never go out."

The captain first gaped, then gasped, and at last groaned. "But—I—that is to say, we might have burnt the ship down."

"You might indeed, sir," acquiesced the solemn Chilo.

"Extraordinary—most extraordinary! Ask the—er—navigator to kindly speak to me." Poor old captain! He felt he needed support.

I rushed to obey.

Cursing softly, the navigator got up from dinner and followed me on deck.

"Navigator," almost shouted the quaking old skipper, "my pipe I left in that drawer has kept alight for—for—nearly four hours, and Mr.—Chilo—tells me it's because the tobacco we use is simply full of saltpetre. Why, we might have burnt the ship down."

The navigator said nothing. What could he say? But he slowly raised his fist behind the captain's back, and, shaking it in Chilo's grinning face, his lips formed the unspoken words, "Chilo—you—brute!" But how he paid Chilo back is another yarn.

WALNUTS AND WINE



THE RESTORATION

"You want a piece for the paper?"

The *Chronicle* reporter, poring over the long list of trivial accident cases on the hospital blotter, turned and found a solemn-visaged orderly at his elbow.

"What's doing, Buckley?" he asked eagerly. "Murder? Suicide?"

"Murder!" sniffed Buckley. "I got a piece for your paper that would make a murder look like a lacerated thumb. 'Member the man we put a new ear on?"

The *Chronicle* man remembered. Columns had been written about Dr. Hoffman's achievement.

"Well," the orderly continued, "we been turnin' out new ears on the average of one a month ever since. Never dreamed there was such a mob o' people without ears. It's as bad as when new noses was the fad. Yes, sir, ears is in great demand, and the price is risin' every day."

"What's this leading up to—an Ear Trust?" the reporter incautiously inquired.

Buckley transfixed him with a stony glare.

Walnuts and Wine

"Feller come in here one day with both ears shy," he resumed, ignoring the interruption; "both, mind you. We never put but one on a man before. Doc Hoffman was kind o' scared o' the job. 'Sir,' says he, 'this is like to cost you twenty thousand dollars for the goods alone.' 'Very well,' says the man; 'fill out this signed check to suit yourself,' says he. 'An' you'll be three months in bed,' says the Doc. 'Hang it, man!' says the feller with the check, 'can you do this job or can't you?'

"So the Doc put an ad. in the 'Personal' columns, like this: 'Sound, healthy, cleanly men in reduced circumstances, willin' to undergo a sacrifice in return for a comfortable fortune, may hear of something to their advantage by callin' at Rooms 408-9 Brown Building, Friday afternoon, between 1 an' 3.' Say! I wish you could have seen the push! Looked like the whole town was in reduced circumstances an' hankerin' to undergo a sacrifice.

"Yet of all that mob there wasn't thirty that was both clean an' healthy lookin', an' when ears was mentioned the whole bunch was scared to death. But there was two—a German an' a Eyetalian—that was willin' to talk business for ten thousand dollars per ear. The Doc talks Dutch, an' come to terms with the German in ten minutes; but he couldn't buy but one ear off of him. So I got an interpreter, an' him an' the Doc an' the Eyetalian jabbered all afternoon. It was five o'clock before the deal was finished. 'Buckley,' says the Doc, 'we've got 'em. One off the German an' one off the Eyetalian—first-class stock.'

"Well, the next day we took an ear off the Eyetalian an' put it on the patient. Six weeks later we fitted our feller with the German's ear, an' in another six weeks we discharged him as good as new, only that he was a little lumpy where the ears growed onto his head, an' one stuck out a trifle more than the other.

"The Doc was so cocky you couldn't get within a mile o' him. But in about a week, back comes the man with the new ears, kickin' an' growlin'. Said he was stone deaf. Knowed when you was talkin', because he could hear a sort o' jumble o' words, but could only understand what was wrote out on a bit o' paper.

"Me an' the Doc was simply knocked silly. Every other man we put a new ear on could hear better than ever, an' we never had

Walnuts and Wine

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EXTENDED TO MATURE AGE



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Walnuts and Wine

no call to exchange the goods. Day after day that feller kept comin' in, an' the Doc pryin' into his ears, but no use.

"By an' by he began to get melancholy, so finally we decided that a trip across the water might help him, an' we shipped him off. 'If it don't do *him* any good,' says the Doc, 'at least it'll be good for us. *We'll* get a rest.' Oh, he was sore!

"First thing when he reached Southampton the man cabled Doc that he wasn't no better. An' every day after that he'd cable twice, askin' what to do, an' threatenin' to come home. Doc used to tear them cablegrams up in little pieces an' jump on 'em. Fourth day he cabled back: 'Travel. Keep on the move. Make the grand tour'—'an' go to Jericho,' he says to me. 'If we keep him busy, maybe he'll have no time to pester us with these fool cables,' says he.

"It was a month ago the Doc sent that cable, an' from that time to this mornin' we never heard a word from his nibs. 'I don't wish him no harm,' the Doc was sayin' to me, 'but if unfortunately he should have died'—when in walks the man himself. You'd never knowed it was the same feller but for the funny lookin' ears. He seemed bright an' cheerful, an' stepped like a two-year-old.

"'Bless you, doctor,' says he, shakin' the Doc by the hand like as if he would wring his arm off. 'Bless you! How are you? Is there anybody here that speaks German?'

"'Why, yes, I can make a stab at it,' says the Doc.

"'Hey?' says the patient. 'Don't sit there an' mumble. Get somebody that speaks German or Eyetalian.'

"Doc pulls out a pad an' writes: 'I can talk German. What do you want?'

"'Talk it, then,' says the man with the new ears, 'an' we'll get along all right.'

"'Yes?' says the Doc, in Dutch. 'Do you mean to say that you can hear an' understand all right when I talk German?'

"'That's what I mean, exactly,' says he.

"An' then the whole thing come out. My boy, that feller had a German's ear an' an Eyetalian's ear. He couldn't make out a word o' English. When he was travelin' in Europe, the minute he sets foot in Germany he finds he can understand the lingo of the natives with one ear as if he was born an' bred in the country. It



Chuck it

If you have been wearing an ugly mask put it away and let your friends enjoy seeing the *real* person now and then, at least. A physician describes some of the effects of coffee thus:

"In some cases the skin becomes sallow and more sensitive to cold; digestion is impaired; appetite gradually wanes; sleep is obtained with difficulty and does not refresh the individual; liver and kidney complaints occur and a kind of joylessness that throws a dark shade all over God's lovely nature."

It is easy to lay aside the "Coffee face" if well-made

POSTUM

is used instead of ordinary coffee.

"There's a Reason"

Read the book "**The Road to Wellville,**" in pkgs.

Postum Cereal Co., Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich., U. S. A.

Walnuts and Wine

takes him a week to tumble to the truth, an' then he makes a bee-line for Italy an' tries the other ear. It works like a charm—he's as good as a native-born Eyetalian. Now he's come back to settle up his affairs on this side, an' then he's goin' over to live in Germany or Italy—he hasn't made up his mind which. Soon as he learns to speak the jargon he can hear he'll be all right."

The *Chronicle* man, forgetful of the press hour of his paper, heedless of the importance of the story, conscious only of the marvellous genius of Dr. Hoffman—and of Buckley—had long since ceased to take notes, and sat there stupefied. The orderly shook him gently by the shoulder and pointed to the clock.

"My boy," said he, "it's gettin' late—better run along. When you put this piece in the paper, keep me out of it—I might lose my job. Just say you got it from the family of the patient, an' that as they don't like publicity, they asked you not to print his name."

Melville F. Ferguson

SPECIALIZED SCIENCE

(WITH ABJECT APOLOGIES TO SAXE NOLM)

By Carolyn Wells

Three—only three, my darling;
Separate, solemn, slow;
Not like the unskilled, shapeless ones
We used to know
When we kissed because we loved each other,
Heedless of style or size;
And lavished kisses as the summer
Lavishes flies.

The first of these, my darling,
Is Hobson's. We are told
'Tis calm, correct, and finished,
Though somewhat cold.
I kiss thee, dear, in Hobson style;
'Tis meet that we should be
Conversant with the various schools
Of kisser.

Walnuts and Wine

Quaker Oats

When it's Quaker Oats, one helping is seldom enough. You may like rolled oats, but you will never realize *how much*, until you eat Quaker Oats.

There is no comparison between the goodness of Quaker Oats and other kinds of rolled oats.

Quaker Oats

has a more delicate flavor, a finer quality and is more appetizing and satisfying than any other kind.

You will recognize and appreciate this difference once you eat Quaker Oats. Order a package of your grocer, serve it for breakfast and your family will remark upon its extra goodness.

At grocers everywhere.

Large package 10c.

(Except in the extreme South and far West.)

Made by

The Quaker Oats Company,
Chicago, U. S. A.



Walnuts and Wine

The second kiss, my darling,
Is Andrew Carnegie's;
'Tis bountiful and thrilling—
It seems to please.
Observe then, oh, my darling,
This kiss resemblance bears
To the rich osculation
Of millionaires.

The last kiss—oh, my darling,
I've had enough of this!
Hereafter I'm contented with
Our same old kiss.

THE WISE MAN

Once upon a time there was a poor overworked Muck Raker who had become tired of his job. He was ambitious, and felt that his efforts were not appreciated. He had a long nose and wore magnifying glasses. One day while raking assiduously he was accosted by a stranger whose aspect was even worse than his own. This man was a Herald of Light. His mission was to seek out sweetness and virtue in a naughty world, and he was admirably equipped with a dark-lantern without any oil, and wore spectacles with smoked lenses. "What are virtue and honesty?" inquired the Muck Raker. "I can't tell you," answered his companion sadly. "I have never seen any." While thus conversing, they were joined by a wise man who proved to be a real reformer disguised as an oculist, and who, perceiving their error, persuaded them to exchange glasses. The remedy was simple but effectual. The Muck Raker is now working union hours and is happy and contented, while the other has already made some most astonishing discoveries.

MORAL: A small ray of sunshine, if welcomed and encouraged, will often destroy an army of offending microbes.

W. F. Rice

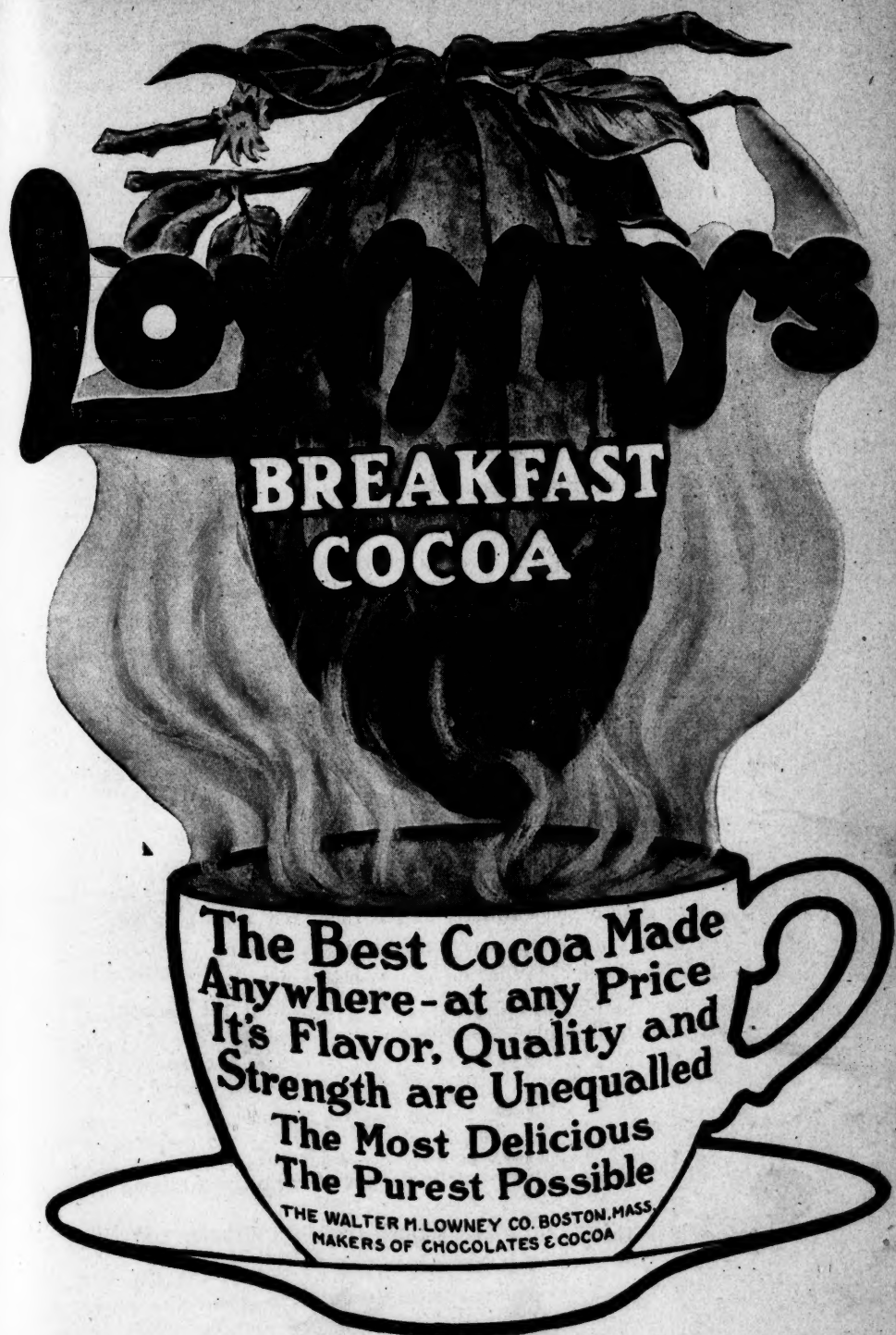
THE POINT OF VIEW

Old Neighbor: "So you liked the old home well enough to come back and die here."

Wanderer: "Yes, you see, there's no place on earth I would so willingly leave."

Eleanor Root

Walnuts and Wine



Walnuts and Wine

PADEREWSKI VERSUS MOZART

The story of how one of Paderewski's most popular compositions came to be written was told recently in London by the famous composer's wife.

It was in those earlier days when the master pianist was a professor at the Warsaw Conservatoire, and the scene was the home of the Polish poet Swietzochowski, who had just expressed the opinion that no living composer could compare in beauty and simplicity with Mozart. At the moment Ignace Paderewski merely shrugged his shoulders, but the following evening he appeared, asking permission to play for the poet a little Mozartian thing which perhaps he did not know. Then he played his own now famous minuet.

"Ah!" exclaimed Swietzochowski triumphantly, as the last note died away, "now you must acknowledge that a composition like that could not have been written in our time."

"Perhaps," came the quiet reply; "only it happens that I composed it this very forenoon."

Warwick James Price

ART OR NATURE?

She had just turned from the blackboard where for five minutes she had been demonstrating a "sum" which to her very youthful pupils seemed difficult.

"Now, children, are you perfectly sure that you understand?"

There was a murmur of assent.

"Do any of you wish to ask a question?"

In the back of the room a small hand was raised aloft. The teacher, looking into the earnestly eager face, felt that glow of satisfaction which we all experience in assisting a budding intellect.

"What is it, Annie? What do you wish to know?"

"Miss M——, are your teeth false?" demanded the earnest little seeker in a shrill treble.

Sheppard Stevens

A QUERY

Why is the writer of a new song in danger of arrest by Anthony Comstock?

Because he is the producer of a nudity.

A. C. H.

Walnuts and Wine

J. E. Caldwell & Co.

Jewelers and Silversmiths — Philadelphia

Suggestions for Gifts

It is impossible in an advertisement to convey an adequate idea of the immensity and variety of our stock. For that reason we have prepared loose leaf portfolios of photographic selections from our various departments, which we shall be pleased to forward on receipt of information as to the articles in which you are interested.

Below are a few suggestions of gifts combining intrinsic value with artistic merit—all at moderate prices:

Solid Gold Belt Buckles

Plain finish, \$22 to \$68, according to weight. Old English engraved, \$25 to \$70. Jeweled, solid gold with diamonds, \$50 to \$150. Combination of diamonds and sapphires, \$160.

Gold Stock or Belt Pins

Polo Mallets, \$5.75 to \$8.50. Coaching Horns, \$4.50 to \$8.50. Crop with lash, \$15. Crop, Bit, and Stirrup, \$37. Fox head on bar with diamond eyes, \$15. Diamond-handle Crop, \$25 to \$43; bar with pearl on blade, \$11. English Crystals with fox, horse or dog head, in natural colors, \$21.50, \$25 and \$29. Semi-precious stone settings, \$8, \$10, \$12, \$15, up to \$21.

Gold Beads and Bead Collarettes

Strings of gold beads, \$7, \$9, \$10, up to \$20. Egg and bead pattern, \$11, \$15 and \$20. New green-gold finish, \$11, \$13 and \$15. Collarettes of gold beads, 4 to 12 strands, \$45, \$50, \$72 and \$85.

Men's Watch Fobs

Solid gold buckle and ring, to attach old charms, \$4.75, \$5.75, up to \$11. Solid gold seals, \$12, \$14, \$15, \$18 and \$21. Semi-precious stone settings—amethyst, topaz, carnelian, jade, sard, bloodstone, \$12 to \$75. Gold chains to take place of ribbon, \$18 to \$60.

Sterling Silver (925/1000 fine) Toilet Articles

An infinite variety of finishes and decorations. Hair brushes, \$3.50 to \$16. Mirrors, \$10 to \$26. Cloth brushes, \$3 to \$12. Velvet or bonnet brushes, \$1.50 to \$8.00. Combs, \$1.00 to \$5.60. Military brushes, \$6.50 to \$23 per pair.

Men's and Women's Watches

For Men: Thin model, solid gold, with gold cap, at \$35, \$45, \$50 and \$65. Repeaters from \$115 up to \$700.

For Women: Solid gold cases, gold inside cap, fine movements, for chain or chatelaine, \$25, \$30, \$35, \$40, \$50, up to \$160. Enameled and jeweled cases, from \$80 to \$900.

No matter where you reside

we can serve you satisfactorily by mail. Assortments of goods forwarded anywhere on receipt of customary business references.

906 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia



Solid Gold Belt Buckle

Gold Stock or Belt Pin

String of Gold Beads

Men's Watch Fob

Men's and Women's Watch

Walnuts and Wine

THE CHRISTMAS PRESENT

By Arnold M. Anderson

What did I git fer Christmas? Wal, I guess ye got me there!
I got er present, Jerry—the shape is kind er square;
It's made o' silk an' ribbons, with lots o' lace an' such—
O' all gol dern contraptions, it cert'nly beats the Dutch!

My daughter Jennie sent it—she wrote it was fer me,
But Gosh! she didn't mention what the thing was meant ter bè!
We've hed a sight o' callers here since that dern present came;
They's been a sight o' guessin' about the fool thing's name.

Maw thinks it's meant fer slippers, but I don't guess it's that,
Becuz it's trimmed too fancy—jest like er woman's hat!
“Most likely it's a shoppin' bag,” said Wilkins' hired man;
Yit Wilkins said himself 'twas some new-fangled kind o' fan!

But Laws! it can't be them! It's plain ernough ter see
It ain't no bag ner fan that Jennie'd send ter me.
When Lindy Perkins hed a look, she riz her voice an' said:
“Why, that's fer handkerchiefs, you know, er jest a cap fer bed!”

Some said 'twas jest fer looks, ter hang upon the wall,
An' some jest shook their heads an' didn't say at all;
Then some looked knowin'-like, an' some was purty mad
An' took ter cussin' it like fun—it puzzled 'em so bad.

Yit 'tain't no use ter worry, ner fret an' make er fuss
About a thing like that what ain't a bit o' use ter us;
I never keered fer fancy work—I never want ter keer!
Why, Jennie must be daft, I think, ter send that fool thing here!

PERPETUAL MOTION

A young countryman who had arrayed himself in festive garments, and had spruced up his overworked horse, started out for an evening drive to town. He drove through the main street with a flourish, and as he reined up in front of the corner store the horse dropped dead. A sympathetic bystander called out to him: “Served you right, Si! You hadn't oughter stopped.”

H. H. Bassette

Walnuts and Wine

Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

The pen with the Clip-Cap

Solves the
Xmas problem



STYLES A AND D Plain and Chased

No.	No.	Price
A 18 or D 22	-	\$2.50
A 13 or D 23	-	\$3.50
A 14 or D 24	-	\$4.00
A 15 or D 25	-	\$5.00
A 16 or D 26	-	\$6.00
A 17	-	\$7.00
A 18	-	\$8.00

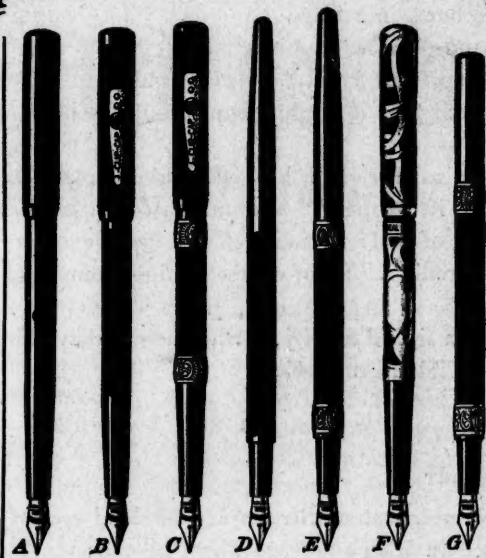
STYLE B Plain or Chased German Silver Clip

No.	Price
B 22 With Clip	\$2.75
B 23	\$3.75
B 24	\$4.25
B 25	\$5.25
B 26	\$6.25
B 27	\$7.25
B 28	\$8.25

STYLE C GOLD BANDS Plain or Chased

No.	Price
C 22 G. M.	\$3.50
C 23 G. M.	\$4.50
C 24 G. M.	\$5.00
C 25 G. M.	\$6.00
C 26 G. M.	\$7.00

*See price of Clips in next column



STYLE E GOLD BANDS Plain or Chased

No.	Price
E 22 G. M.	\$3.50
E 23 G. M.	\$4.50
E 24 G. M.	\$5.00
E 25 G. M.	\$6.00
E 26 G. M.	\$7.00

STYLE F SILVER FILIGREE With Name-plate

No.	Price
F 12 Fil.	\$5.00
F 14 Fil.	\$7.00
F 15 Fil.	\$8.50
F 16 Fil.	\$9.50
F 18 Fil.	\$12.00

STYLE G GOLD BANDS Plain or Chased

No.	Price
G 2 G. M.	\$3.50
G 3 G. M.	\$4.50
G 4 G. M.	\$5.00
G 5 G. M.	\$6.00
G 6 G. M.	\$7.00

CLIPS ADD TO COST—
German Silver 25c.
Sterling Silver 30c.
Rolled Gold \$1.00.
Solid Gold \$2.00.

Unit figure in number indicates size of gold pen contained in holder.

For Man or Woman - Boy or Girl

The Christmas problem is to find a suitable gift. Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen solves this problem because it means pleasure to the giver and satisfaction to the user, whether man or woman, boy or girl. To the woman in search of a gift for a man this pen will come as a particularly appropriate suggestion. It is of service everywhere and becomes more valuable as time goes on. With a present of this kind goes the satisfaction of having given the best because—there are imitations. Insist on the genuine.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION BOXES



FOR UNMOUNTED PENS



FOR GOLD MOUNTED PENS

For Sale Almost Everywhere. If your town has no dealer write for Xmas booklet

L.E. Waterman Co., 173 Broadway, N.Y.

8 SCHOOL ST., BOSTON • 209 STATE ST., CHICAGO • 136 ST. JAMES ST., MONTREAL •
742 MARKET ST., SAN FRANCISCO • 12 GOLDEN LANE LONDON, E.C.

Walnuts and Wine

THE BEREAVEMENT

Pallid and trembling, the grief-stricken wife met her husband at the door.

"She is gone!" came the wail from her set lips.

The man's face blanched, and he reeled as if from a heavy blow. Half dazed, he sank into a chair.

"Gone!" he echoed vaguely.

"Gone," repeated the wife, with a brave effort at self-control.

"Oh, what shall I do without her! I had learned to lean upon her so, she was so much to me, and now——" Her courage forsook her quite, and she burst into tears.

Her husband drew her to him.

"Don't weep, dear heart," he said tenderly. "Tell me about it. I had feared that it might happen, but the blow has fallen so suddenly."

The wife raised her head, her eyes flashed fire.

"How did it happen?" she reiterated in a changed voice.

"Why, that cat of a Mrs. Jenkins offered her five dollars a week and no washing or ironing. So of course Bridget jumped at it, and left without notice."

And the man sighed heavily, for he knew that for him it meant a weary round of intelligence offices.

Elsie Duncan Yale

A NOVEL REPORT

The Superintendent of Streets in Cleveland recently summoned to his presence an Irish officer, to whom he said:

"It is reported to me that there is a dead dog in Horner Street. I want you to see to its disposition."

"Yis, sor," said the subordinate, who immediately set out upon his mission.

In half an hour the Irishman telephoned his chief as follows: "I have made inquiries about the dog's disposition, and I find that it was a savage one."

E. T.

MISAPPREHENSION

Would-be purchaser in a country store: "Have you any black hose?"

Clerk: "No, we haven't a hoe in the store."

Eleanor Root



A New Refinement in Stationery

WHITING'S

French Chambray

Just another addition to that unique class of *fabric finish* correspondence papers which the WHITING PAPER COMPANY has made famous. It ranks with WHITING'S FRENCH ORGANDIE and ORGANDIE GLACÉ in exquisiteness of quality and style as an ideal correspondence paper. WHITING'S WOVEN LINEN remains the standard paper for the personal or club correspondence of gentlemen. A comparison with any other papers represented to be the same as WHITING'S will show the marked superiority of our product.

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Walnuts and Wine

IRVING AS A BARNSTORMER

During his last American tour the late Sir Henry Irving told the following story on himself one evening at the Players' Club:

"My barnstorming days seem very distant, and yet very dear to me now. I recall with particular pleasure a melodrama of crime in high life wherewith I barnstormed the provinces for two successful seasons.

"My part called, in the first act, for a dark stage. In this darkness I fought with an old earl, threw him heavily, and, when he did not rise after the loud thud of his fall, I cried out:

"Great heavens! What have I done?"

"Usually this scene impressed and moved my audience tremendously, but I remember one night in Birmingham when a coster, with one little witticism, turned my outcry and the darkness and the old earl's tragic fall into ridicule and laughter. I have never seen that coster, but I remember his voice well. It was a slow, dry voice, like Mark Twain's, and it manifested itself just after the fall of my aged and noble antagonist. The old earl had dropped heavily, and in the silent obscurity I had cried: 'Great heavens! What have I done?' when the coster spoke up:

"Strike a match, young fellow, and we'll have a look."

Owen Kildare

BUSINESS HONESTY

Last winter the proprietors of a hardware store in a country town hung out this sign:

JONES & SMITH

Cheap Skates

It was several days before its double meaning dawned on them.

L. B. Coley

THE PROPER CAPER

Mary: "Florence is certainly 'making hay while the sun shines.'"

Jane: "Well, isn't she a grass-widow?"

A. C. H.

HE WAS EXCUSED

"Jones," said the head book-keeper, "you are late this morning."

"Yes, sir," answered Jones. "My wife is out of town."

James H. Lambert, Jr.

This Artloom Couch Cover \$5.00

A perfectly reversible Gobelin cover, rich and heavy. Three yards long and sixty inches wide in the cloth with a heavy knotted fringe on all sides. Art colors—soft reds and greens.



Here is something new —the first time a Gobelin

pattern has been reproduced in this country in a tapestry that is perfectly reversible.

It is a cover of remarkable beauty and we want Lippincott readers to have the first chance at it. It is a good example of Artloom value. It is our desire to have an Artloom curtain, a couch cover or a table cover, or some bit of Artloom service and beauty in every Lippincott home. Ask your dealer to show you Artloom couch covers the very next time you go shopping (*identify by label Artloom on every piece*).

We have the largest tapestry works in America, and every home-maker should have our Style Book J of Artloom curtains, couch covers and table covers. We'll send it when you write.

Philadelphia Tapestry Mills, Philadelphia

Walnuts and Wine

THE MODEST BURGLAR

By R. R. Kirk

The burglar is a modest man;
He's never seen by day,
And if accosted late at night
He tries to steal away.

Whene'er he has to make a call
He never makes a fuss;
He keeps as quiet as he can
So's not to trouble us.

He is so modest, if you'd say,
"Why, you are Burglar Jim!"
He'd say, with evident distress,
"No, mister, I ain't him!"

AN OLD GAME

Fiancée: "Oh, dearest, we have already received a hundred wedding gifts."

Fiancé: "All right, let's go in and guess what they're used for."

J. T.

THE HIGHWAY-WOMAN

By Harold Susman

She held me up! She stole my heart!
Her method it was simple:
She blushed! She drew her lips apart!
She then displayed a dimple!

PROBABLY

Teacher, to Little Boy: "Freddie Brooks, are you making faces at Nellie Lyon?"

Freddie Brooks: "Please, teacher, no, ma'am; I was trying to smile, and my face slipped."

Clarence Birch

Walnuts and Wine

MENNEN'S

BORATED TALCUM

TOILET POWDER

Any Child

who has enjoyed the benefit of Mennen's Borated Talcum Toilet Powder daily since birth is free from the painful chapping and chafing which comes with winter weather.

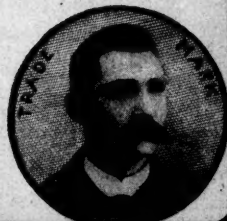
Mennen's Borated Talcum Toilet Powder

soothes and heals, and if used daily, enables the most tender skin to resist the ill effects of changing conditions of weather.

Put up in non-refillable boxes, for your protection. If Mennen's face is on the cover, it's genuine, that's a guarantee of purity. Delightful after shaving. Sold everywhere, or by mail 25c. Sample Free.

GERHARD MENNEN COMPANY, Newark, N. J.

Try Mennen's Violet (Borated) Talcum Powder.
It has the scent of fresh cut Violets.



Walnuts and Wine

OPPORTUNE

"What are you doing?" harshly demanded the brutal husband, abruptly entering the room.

"I'm just going to trim this forty-nine cent hat I bought yesterday," replied the trembling wife.

"Extravagant woman, you will ruin me with your everlasting bargain hunting!" he exclaimed, enraged, and, seizing the hat, he crumpled it in his hands, trampled it under foot, and, finally flinging it into the corner of the room, strode away.

Weeping, the wife stooped to pick up her sullied property, but her tear-stained face was irradiated by an ecstatic smile as her eyes fell upon it.

"Oh!" she exclaimed in delight, "I have the same hope of that forty-dollar French hat I saw yesterday, and I have just bought it that way myself. All it needs is a couple of red roses and a bunch of lavender buttercups."

William D. Yule

INFLECTION

The wife of an army officer at a Western town had occasion to visit a small neighboring town, to do some shopping at what is called the General Store. She was much entertained by the variety and antiquity of the stock of goods, as she passed out her eyes were attracted by a pile of mottoes elaborately lettered and ornately framed, the upper one being a scriptural passage: "Walk in love."

As she paused, the clerk, a dapper young man of more affability than advantages, stepped forward with the remark, "Them are the latest things in mottoes. This top one is well to put over a young lady's door—" *Walk in love.*"

Abigail Robinson

A LITERARY CAT

Two little girls of a small town in the interior of Ohio were presented with a kitten, and a dispute arose as to the name it should be given. Edith had a little boy friend named William, and demanded that the kitten be given that name, but Mabel, whose friend's name was Dean, protested vigorously; so the matter was compromised by calling the pet "William Dean."

The animal's vocal powers were unusually well developed. It squalled constantly. So the family decided to give the kitten an additional name and call it "William Dean Howells."

Dwight Spencer Anderson

Walnuts and Wine

Road of a Thousand Wonders

through California and Oregon
over the Southern Pacific



ONE HOUR Snow Drifts to Oranges and Flowers

On a midwinter
day may be seen at one
glance the snow clad
mountains, orange trees,
green leaves, golden fruit
and white blossoms —
and glowing midwinter
flowers of foothill and Valley
^{along}_{the} Coast Line — Shasta Route.

Road of a Thousand Wonders is a charming story book of over one hundred beautiful pictures in colors, telling of the wonderful journey from Los Angeles, California, through Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles Hot Springs, Del Monte, Santa Cruz, Big Trees, San Jose, San Francisco, Sacramento, Shasto Region, Rogue River and Willamette Valley to Portland, Oregon; along the trail, a hundred years old, of the Franciscan friars. For a copy and a sample copy of the beautiful illustrated magazine, Sunset, send 15 cents to Chas. S. Fee, Passenger Traffic Manager. Dept. I., Southern Pacific Co., Union Ferry Building, San Francisco, California.

Walnuts and Wine

SIGNS OF THE SEASON

By Rebekah Burnett

When the white Snowdrops away
And the Freesia does not freeze;
When the Crocus croaks all day,
Spring of course has come to stay.

When the Cowslips out so gay,
And the Larkspur sweetly sings,
Trumpet Flower and Blue Bells play,
For the perfect summer day.

When Snapdragons snap and run,
When the Bay Trees bay the moon,
And the Poppies in the Sun
Pop, dog-days have surely come.

Autumn follows summer fast.
Smilax smiles a sad good-by;
Daisies' days are done at last,
Wildly blow the windflowers past.

Winter's cold is brisk and keen,
And the Snowballs fast do fly,
Yet the Christmas Rose is seen,
And the Evergreens are green.



RESOURCEFUL

Wife: "I hope, doctor, that you may be able to do something for Henry."

Physician: "What is the nature of his complaint?"

Wife: "He is forever worrying about money."

Physician (grimly): "I think I can relieve him of that."

T.



HE SHOULD HAVE CUT IT

"That old duffer was unexpectedly asked to speak at our class dinner, and he got up and talked for forty minutes."

"Do you think he had his speech all cut and dried?"

"Well—it may have been dried."

J. M. Hendrickson



Razac at the Office

HUNDREDS of letters are reaching us—letters of congratulation from users of the Razac; business and professional men, Army and Navy people, actors, editors, workers in every industry.

We find the business man ordering an extra Razac to keep at the office. He can shave there on occasion as quickly and easily as at home.

The Razac means relief from barber-shop bondage, a saving of time, of money, and temper. It means freedom from tools and towels that reek of other faces, and, best of all, a cool, smooth shave for every man no matter how tough or wiry his beard. No beard is a hard beard for the Razac.

Any one can use a Razac, and use it with impunity—shave against the grain, clean up all the corners, shave the back of the neck. It shaves smooth as velvet and does not irritate the skin.

The Razac outfit complete, ready for

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Walnuts and Wine

THE LAUGH ON FATHER

Mother and father were having a somewhat animated discussion, to which the five-year-old listened with alternating apprehension and delight. Finally she chimed in.

"I know whose side I'm on," she chirruped.

"Be still," said her father sternly.

"I know whose side I'm on," repeated the young lady, sidling up to her mother.

The father's annoyance increased at this threatened division in the family. "Be still," he commanded more sternly.

But the young lady was not to be squelched so easily. "I know whose side I'm on," she declared again, as her father arose to meet the occasion. "I'm for Roosevelt."

And in the laugh which followed, the difference of opinion was forgotten.

Francis R. Singleton

THE REASON WHY

Recently a bashful young woman from a backwoods county in Virginia went into a local store carrying three chickens. She inquired the price of chickens, and at the same time put them on the counter.

"Will they lay there?" asked the clerk, who did not know that the chickens' legs were tied.

She bit her handkerchief in embarrassment a moment, and said:

"No, sir; they are roosters."

Will M. Huntley

GOOD REASONS

Mrs. Ready: "I wonder why the De Swells have stopped inviting us to their dinners?"

Mr. Ready: "I suppose it was because we always went."

T. E. McGrath

THE EFFECT

"There's a man living on our street who's had his stomach taken out."

"Good gracious! Should you know it to look at him?"

"No. To tell you the truth, he looks disheartened."

C. A. Bolton

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Walnuts and Wine

TOO WELL KNOWN

The Bishop of Albany, the Right Reverend W. C. Doane, follows the custom of English bishops in signing formal communications, using "William of Albany" instead of giving his name in full. In this connection an amusing story is told. It appears that the bishop alighted from an express train in the station at Albany, to find himself besieged on all sides by cabmen, with the usual "Cab, cab, cab! Right this way, sir! Here's yer cab!" One of the "cabbies," on perceiving the bell-crowned hat, long clerical coat, and other indications of the calling of the passenger, evidently recognized Bishop Doane, for he suddenly held up his finger, exclaiming:

"Cab, William of Albany? Cab? Right this way, William!"

Fenimore Martin

A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE

Next to a big black cigar and billiards, books are Mark Twain's chief diversion. Aside from the pleasure he gets out of them, the humorist has discovered that they possess an unusual trait.

"My books are my best friends," said he not long ago at "Quarry Farm," his summer home near Elmira, N. Y., as his eyes swept row after row of attractive looking volumes. "When I tire of them I can shut them up."

J. Maxwell Beers

WHAT TO AVOID

By Sam S. Stinson

In building castles in the air,
Be up to all the tricks,
And most of all, pray, have a care,
And do not buy gold bricks.

MIXED METAPHORS

Leonard, aged four, was watching the drum major.

"Mother, what does the man with the big stick do?"

"He beats time, my son."

The next band that passed had no drum major. Leonard watched it inquiringly until it was out of sight and then asked:

"Mother, where was the man what—what hits the clock?"

H. G.

Walnuts and Wine

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Walnuts and Wine

AN EXCHANGE OF APOLOGIES

The night Mr. and Mrs. Elton held their reception at the Table Club, Mr. Elton, whose eyesight is very poor, bowed politely to every one he saw, including the waiters. Mrs. Elton remonstrated with him for this, and so the remainder of the evening he was more careful in distributing recognitions. But the following unfortunate accident occurred nevertheless.

At nine-thirty Mrs. Elton came to him with a wild look in her eye and delivered herself of the alarming news that the silverware they had brought to be used for buffet lunch was in a box downstairs in the cloak room. Would he hurry down to get it, and come up the back way?

Mr. Elton turned to a man at his elbow. "Follow me," he said. In a moment the box was opened and Mr. Elton fished out an armful of spoons. "Take these," he said, thrusting them at the man. "Fill your pockets as fast as you can—somebody might come and catch us. I wouldn't have this known for the world. Here's another handful—tie it up in your napkin."

"Napkin?" exclaimed the man. "Do you suppose I brought a napkin to the reception?"

"Oh, my dear sir," cried Mr. Elton, realizing his error, "I beseech you to pardon me—I entreat you to forgive me—why—er—I took you for a waiter."

"That's all right," responded the guest, with a deprecatory gesture. "Don't give the matter another thought. I took *you* for a thief!"

Dwight Spencer Anderson

HOW "PULL" WORKS

By E. G. Nedloh

The horse with strongest pull
Must do most of the work.
A smart man's no such fool;
It's "pull" that lets him shirk.

NEEDED IT

"He is a diamond in the rough."

"That is why we cut him."

T. E. McGrath



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